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THE FORMATION OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

A Contribution to Christian Ethics

BY

W. S. BRUCE, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "THE ETHICS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT"
"OUR HERITAGE: INDIVIDUAL, SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS"
"SOCIAL ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN MORALITY: CROALL LECTURES FOR 1903-4"
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THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

WITH GRATITUDE, AFFECTION, AND ESTEEM

PREFATORY NOTE TO SECOND EDITION

THE demand for a Second Edition has afforded an opportunity for a careful revision of the whole book. Several portions have been rewritten; two chapters have been enlarged; and references have been given to much cognate ethical literature published since 1902. It is hoped that the volume is now better fitted for its intended office as an aid to the study of Christian Character, and that it may be not less worthy of the indulgent reception which it has met in this country and in America.

BANFF, *February* 1908.

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THE FORMATION OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

Every man's fortune is fashioned by his own character.

—CORNELIUS NEPOS.

His strength was as the strength of ten,
Because his heart was pure.

—TENNYSON.

The spiritual progress of mankind is an unmeaning phrase, unless it means a progress of personal character and to personal character.—PROFESSOR GREEN.

The largest part of the power of the world's great men was latent. This is that which we call Character,—a reserved force which acts directly by presence and without means.—EMERSON.

Ernst ist das Leben, heiter ist die Kunst.—SCHILLER.

CHAPTER I

Introductory

Our aim in this volume is definite and practical. We wish to describe the genesis and growth of Christian Character. It is highly desirable that we should know what are the specific features of the character which is rooted in Christ, and which is moulded by His Holy Spirit. Nor can any study be more practical and useful than that which concerns itself with the organising of endowments, impulses, and tastes into a character of robust strength and Christlike beauty.

Christian Character is the most interesting chapter in the modern science of Christian Ethics. But in books on this subject, as yet mainly written in Germany, it is treated in such a formal manner that its importance is not readily perceived. In this volume we shall endeavour to discuss the matter in a popular style; and we trust that the great usefulness of the subject may become patent to all our readers.

The title of the book is a protest against two opposite errors that have found currency in circles widely apart. There are, on the one hand, some very good people who emphasise the "Christian," and give little heed to the "character." Such people are exceedingly impatient of exhortations to duties, and of insistence on the virtues that are genial to a godly life. If only an earnest gospel be proclaimed, they maintain that the duties of the Christian life will spring spontaneously out of the soil of piety. Give us the warm, loving gospel of Jesus Christ, they say, and we can do without lectures on virtues and obligations.

To others, of a different type of mind, there appears to be little if any connection between the "character" and the "Christian." They believe that morality may be sufficiently well practised without the inculcation of Christian truths, and even without any belief in them. Naturalism in ethics is fashionable in many quarters. There are loud voices to-day that say to us, "Put away your Christian creeds; they are useless appendages to morals. The social machine will work smoothly without your Bibles and your Prayer-books. Morality is independent of the sanctions of religion. Character can easily thrive without Christianity."

The title we have chosen for this volume indicates our belief that those two halves must be knit together into a logical whole in order to constitute the abiding strength of manhood. Without character the Christian is a moral weakling, a babe in Christ. He occupies only the lowest standard of the school of grace. His place is in the infant-room, not in the university. His food is milk, not strong meat.

The moralist who, from the other side, despises the aid of religion, throws away one of the best safeguards of his life. The Spirit of Jesus Christ helps Virtue to preserve her "tranquil balance." The religion of Christ has a wonderful staying power. It makes a man kindlier, nobler, better, gives constancy to purpose and consistency to action. It fills the heart with love and the soul with peace. Some moralists, who have thrown religious beliefs overboard, have had in times of storm and stress to invent a makeshift for religion. We have only to go to France to find a philosophy that first forsook the worship of Christ, and then, with strange inconsistency, had to borrow the necessary sanctions and motives from what is called the religion of humanity.

This goes to prove that between the moral and religious elements in human life there is an

essential and organic connection. The Christian man is *man at his highest moral efficiency.* He is the man with the richest ethical experience. Christian graces are the finest flowering of human virtue. When the Spirit of God begins to quicken and nourish the roots of piety, obligation becomes joyous service, and duty changes its name to delight. It gives to all virtuous activity stability, encouragement, and permanence. Morality is more securely based and more powerfully sanctioned. The ethical and religious factors are interwoven in, and give firmness to, the texture of the fabric of Christian character. Dissociated from faith in God, character would lose in beauty and in strength.

Christianity has always laid emphasis on the inwardness of morality, and has reminded men that Being is as important as Having or Doing. It has also presented a new ideal of character in the person of its Founder; and all its ethical teaching it connects with the Christ who dwells in the heart by faith. When the truth is made to centre in His glowing personality, it acquires the force of a flame of holy enthusiasm. *Duty gets a new dynamic; ethics receives a new baptism.*[1]

[1] Cf. Dorner, *System of Christian Ethics* (T. & T. Clark), p. 54.

Most of all, the Christian religion supplies powerful motives in the formation of character. When St. John says, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God: and we are," he makes the most forceful appeal in favour of holiness that it is possible to make to the heart and conscience. Loyalty unites with love to bind us to goodness. When the Christian man says, "I hope yet to be like Him, and to see Him as He is," he feels the power of the moral imperative to purify himself "even as He is pure."

It was here, at the fountainhead of character, that the ancient philosophy of Greece, otherwise so grand and so instructive, had to confess its impotence. The contrast between its defects in this respect and the characteristic moral energy of the Christian religion is pointed out by one of the most impartial writers of recent times. In his *History of European Morals*, Mr. W. E. H. Lecky says: "It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love, and has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions; has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the highest incentive

to its practice, and has exercised so deep an influence, that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind, than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and all the exhortations of moralists."

The fact that some men who have denied Christ and lived in outlawry of Christianity have yet been pure, just, and generous, does not prove that we can ignore religion and yet maintain a high moral tone. For modern society has been imbued with Christian influences. The very leaders of scepticism, the front rank authors of naturalistic ethics, are the unmistakable children of Christianity. They have been educated in Christian homes: they have breathed an atmosphere saturated with Christian sentiments: they have imbibed a literature seasoned with Christian teaching. They say they have rejected the creeds and the gospels of Christianity. But the ethical influence of these gospels has reached them by a thousand other rills. It has distilled for them its finest essences through Milton and Cowper, through Scott and Tennyson and Carlyle. George Eliot, as a child, breathed the air of the simplest evangelical religion. We imbibe the spirit of the Gospels as we inhale the oxygen of the air. Try it as we may, *we cannot in Britain dereligionise*

our life. Christ has touched our politics, our education, our art and science, and left His mark upon them all.

How long morality would survive religion and live on its own motive power, it is impossible to say. The French Revolution, which disowned religion, also cut many of the bonds of morals. And in the lives of some modern *littérateurs* and in the writings of the Fleshly School, there are ugly indications which suggest that morality would fall into sterility as soon as it was entirely divorced from religion. The experience of thirty centuries is against the theorists, and is in favour of the opinion that ethics would suffer by the loss of the sanctions of religion, and that character would be weakened by the withdrawal of the motive power of piety.

The importance of our subject is shown by the consideration *that the attainment of character is the chief end of all moral culture.* It is the goal that every one desires to gain who undergoes the severe ordeal of self-discipline. "Character is nature disciplined." The end of all higher effort is to convert the irrational "stream of tendency" within us into a current that shall make for righteousness. We feel that a life which is without this governing and moralising energy has missed its meaning.

The victim of intemperance, who is under the sway of an uncontrolled passion, has forgotten the main purpose of life. When a man comes to think that pleasure, and not character, is the end of existence, the whole government of life vanishes, and a poor, partial, stunted being takes the place of the grand totality of Christian manhood.

In nothing was the originality of Jesus more manifest than in the emphasis which He laid on character. His Kingdom may be said to be founded on this basis. He was ever insisting on the truth that a man's life consisteth not in what he possesses, but in what he is. While the men of His time thought only of condition, Jesus spoke to His disciples of character. Not what he has, but what he is, makes a man blessed. *Of the eight Beatitudes there is not one that does not attach itself to character.* The blessing of circumstance, of accident, of environment, is transient; the blessedness of meekness, of purity, of poverty of spirit, of mercifulness, is abiding. The men of the time thought that the rich, the rulers, the honoured, the possessors of place and pomp, were the happy. It was a new revelation when Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek: they shall inherit the earth." The Kingdom of God was founded on character.

The same thing may be seen if we look at the *parables of Jesus.* How many of them are designed to throw light on the importance of character and on the dangerous vices that undermine it! What is the parable of the Sower but a sermon on character? With what a master-hand does Jesus point out the distinctive features of a character devoid of the Christian virtues in the parable of the Rich Fool, of the Two Debtors, of the Tares and the Wheat, of the Good Samaritan and the Levite, of the Ten Virgins, of the Wedding Garment. All these point out deficiencies in character, or urge the cultivation of habits and virtues that strengthen it. How careful was Jesus in the training of the Twelve! How He repressed undisciplined enthusiasm and raw haste, and tried to discipline His disciples' powers! Then came Pentecost and the Mission of the Comforter, and poltroons became preachers, and faint-hearted men were changed into heroes, and fishermen of Galilee set about converting the world to Christianity. What an elevation of character! What a powerful testimony to the influence that the Spirit of Christ exercises over individual lives!

The importance of this subject is increased *by the present position of unbelief*, and by the disposition of the forces at this moment arrayed against the

Christian religion. Thirty years ago it might be said by a Boyle lecturer that "the obligation of the more conspicuous principles of Christian morality is fully admitted by all the writers with whom we have practically to deal." Such a statement could not to-day be made. There are now authors whose writings are widely read, who announce in plainest terms that they repudiate not only the doctrines but also the ethics of Christianity, and who declare that they will pay no respect to the conventional restrictions that it has hitherto imposed upon society. Forty years ago one could say that the leaders of the Utilitarian School were in sympathy with all the great moral interests of Christian society, and that its ethics comprehended the substance of the Sermon on the Mount. But this morality is the object of the most bitter hostility of the Socialism of to-day.

The exponents of the Socialistic Ethic affirm that the morality of the Bible is not less irrational than the doctrines on which it is based, and that the entire theory of the Christian life is now in a state of utter decadence. When even family ties and domestic purity are openly assailed by the new Apostles of Free Thought, and war is declared against all that is holiest and dearest in life, it is time that we should earnestly realise the close nexus that binds together creed and conduct, faith and

morals. Historically and logically they are one, as are stem and blossom. The evolution of social life in the past has proved that the Christian creed and the Christian character are vitally and essentially correlated. It is therefore of the utmost importance to show how a strong character can be built up only on a basis of Christian belief, and how intimately conjoined are creed and character.

The importance of the subject is further shown by the fact that everywhere *it is character which gives weight and influence.* In every community it is the man of sterling character to whom is intrusted the guiding of public affairs, and whose judgment carries general approval. Cleverness divorced from character is suspected and feared. But moral worth always counts. It may make mistakes, but its failures are not reckoned faults. It is judged not by successful results, but by honest efforts.

We all know the difference in a community between a man who is merely a unit and one who is a centre of influence. Compare the two closely, and you will find that the distinction is one of character. Character is but another name for influence. "How many do you count me for?" said Alexander the Great to some soldiers whom he overheard calculating the chances of their defeat by a numerous enemy. Alexander's presence was worth battalions. It is

said that on the field of Waterloo the moral influence of the Iron Duke, as he rode from square to square, was simply immeasurable. Whenever the men saw that grand face looking on, a new courage stole into their hearts. Who can estimate what Luther was to Germany, or John Knox to Scotland? All the world over, it is not cleverness, it is character, that has weight and influence.

It is easy to see how intimately this subject *concerns the Christian Church.* The strength of a Church can never be properly estimated by numbers.[1] There is a great temptation, amid the rivalry of sects, to count communicants, and estimate the Church's strength by the number of its adherents. But to gauge the moral force of a Church by mensuration, whether of membership or of money, is to run counter to the whole teaching of Scripture, and to forget the whole history of the Christian Church.

Men are all for quantity; but God is all for quality. They count on numbers, He on character. They ask, How many are your supporters? He asks, What manner of persons are ye in all holy conversation and godliness? He cares less for the work than for the workman, thinks less of the results than of the means by which they are attained. While we want a larger membership, He wants a

[1] Cf. Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character*, p. 16.

better stamp of membership. Not the Three Hundred, but the Three, to stand in the Pass and beat back the enemy; not more men, but rather more manhood in the men; not more Christians, but more that is Christlike in the Christians; not more branches so much as more fruit on the branches. There may be some pastors who would care more to add a hundred new members to the Church than to have the piety of their present members a hundredfold increased. But we are certain that the cause of Christ would be more largely promoted by the elevation of the standard of character within the Church than by a rapid extension of her bounds. The Church's ultimate progress (and this is always our Lord's aim) would be more rapid and real if our efforts were directed rather to the increase of the fruit-bearing capacity of the grafted branches than to the multiplication of fruitless suckers on the vine stem. The extension of the Church can never safely go beyond the intension, nor the evolution outrun the involution. Numbers may become a source of danger to the Church. Her true strength is gauged by the Christian character of her membership.

The religion of Jesus Christ is the religion of the renovated integrity of manhood. If it seeks to repress, it is only repression at one point, that there

may be the healthier development at every other point. In that development it would have us appropriate whatever enriching elements we can assimilate to our true self. All things serve the use of him who seeks to make himself a vessel meet for the Master's use. All ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are for the building up of the Church till we attain to "a full-grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 12, R.V.).

Perfection, and nothing less, is the end of Christianity. Let that never be forgotten by any one of us. The "perfect man" of the New Testament is the man of full growth, of rightly developed manhood. On this point St. Paul and St. James agree. If the one speaks of "the full-grown man," the other bids his friends count it all joy when they fall into temptations, because these are the Sculptor's tools that shape them into a character which is "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." And He who is for us the Model of all character said, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Human nature does not like a too lofty standard. Leave it at least some places of rest where it may dissipate its energies and live at ease. Men plead for easier ways to heaven, and would pass by every Hill Difficulty on the way thither. They have not

understood that a lower standard would be perfectly useless. Were the standard to be lowered, all strenuous striving would come to an end. The noblest motives would cease to operate.[1] The summit of the mountain braces to perseverance, and makes us cling to the hand of the Divine Guide. In the heavy atmosphere of the vine-covered valley we cannot do what the invigorating air of the Alps enables us to accomplish. We cannot afford to lose the high call and inspiration of lofty standards. Though Christianity encourages contentment with our external conditions, it never bids us be content with medium attainments. "Heaven does not deal in averages. It proposes only the perfect."

While gracious provision is made for weak and erring humanity, yet in all God's forgiveness there is no hint of lowering the standard. The principle of Christianity is not the modern socialistic rule of levelling down to a flat plain of dead uniformity. It does the very opposite: it takes the beggar from the dunghill and sets him among princes, and makes him inherit a throne. It does not level down. It levels up,—up to the lofty altitude of holiness. It makes all men God's sons, and bids them strive to reach the moral stature of Jesus Christ.

It is not enough that we are strong in some single

[1] Cf. Illingworth, *Christian Character*, p. 38.

virtue: we must seek to be strong all round. The Greek moralists insisted on a great number of single virtues, but did not discover the fundamental virtue which is the higher truth of all the rest. The moral magnates of the ancient world were splendid specimens of this or that particular virtue: Socrates of common sense, Plato of wisdom, Cato of public integrity. But if strong at one point they were weak at other points. They failed to represent morality as a whole. Their lives were often in collision with some salient command of the moral law. They might be said to be acquainted with the cardinal virtues, but not to know virtue. They forgot the unity of the moralities. But we know that all the virtues are correlated, and that in this connection every one of them may be spoken of as cardinal. The honest man will never be ungenerous; the generous man will never be dishonest. The temperate man will be industrious, and the truly industrious man will avoid intemperance. A man's moral energy translates itself into all the virtues, and correlates all moral excellences.

Our perfection no less than our happiness depends upon our cultivating *all* the virtues of the Christian life. It is impossible to maintain a schism where God has joined all together. In this connection it will be seen that our happiness and our perfection

are identical. For what is our perfection but the full and harmonious development of all our faculties, bodily, mental, and spiritual, so that they can freely work as God meant them to do? He who with mind and desire and will energises freely and rightly, has surely reached the summit of happiness. The purest pleasure is the right of unforced and unimpeded energy. The man who is wholly controlled by the Spirit of God is the man who will work at peace with all his powers at their best; and his work will bear the marks of highest excellence.

One other reason may be added to illustrate the importance of the subject. It is character that gives dignity and worth to every grade of life. Archimedes suffers no indignity by working at his screw; but the screw is rendered interesting by the fact that the hand of the philosopher of Syracuse was upon it. Robert Burns, living the life of a frugal farmer at Mossgiel, was not belittled by his toil; but Burns added a new interest to the work of the ploughman and reaper. From character there flows forth a virtue that redeems life from littleness, and makes the humblest and most menial duty but a mirror to reflect the greatness of the spirit that undertakes it. "Great" and "small" are two terms, depending for their worth entirely on the standard

of value in the speaker's mind. Inward worth cannot be estimated by mere money tables. It is the depth at which we live, and not the surface extension of our life, that is of importance. The soul that has any degree of love and truth, of faith and hope, is larger than all lands and heritages. It is character that confers worth and weight on its possessor.

And this worth is so valuable that men everywhere make appeal to it for help. From it virtue flows forth. The very hem of its garment is instinct with healing. The world, that can easily afford to lose many men, cannot want the man of character. He is constantly giving it tone and strength and help. Yet he is none the poorer for his giving, as the poet is none the sadder for his song.

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF SUBJECT

Then welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

—R. BROWNING.

This above all—to thine own self be true,
And it must follow as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

—SHAKESPEARE.

As iron sharpeneth steel, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.—SOLOMON.

Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And go for ever and for ever.

—TENNYSON.

Never suffer a single emotion to evaporate without exacting from it some practical service.

—PROFESSOR W. JAMES.

CHAPTER II

Historical Review of Subject

I

It is strange that a subject of such immense importance to the Christian life should have been so long overlooked by the Church. Only within the last thirty years has Christian Character been made a matter of earnest study. The reasons of this neglect are not easily discovered.

Probably it arose from the fact that the Protestant Church had to contend for her creed against many adversaries, and that she naturally emphasised the vital importance of her doctrines. The theology of the last three centuries was compelled to give its strength to the establishment of doctrine, with the result that the study of Christian ethics was neglected. Christian men, thinking only of their beliefs and the corresponding emotions, fell into an excessive subjectivity. Looking on life rather as a scene of probation than a field for the training of

character, they kept their finger continually on the spiritual pulse, and recorded in their diaries the varying moods of religious feeling. The eye was kept fixed on conscience rather than on character. In their quiet, secluded lives they no doubt faithfully cultivated their talents. But it is not in seclusion that a Christian character is built up. That is done, as Goethe says, not in silence or retirement, but in the great stream of life—

> "Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille,
> Sich ein Character in dem Strom der Welt."

It is also probable that the Protestant Church avoided the study of Christian ethics in a spirit of reaction from the studies prosecuted in the Church of Rome. Against the doctrine of a universal and unconditional moral claim which covers the whole Christian life, Rome maintains there is a kind of goodness which is superior to the category of duty, and which neither conscience nor Scripture requires of the members of the Church. These "Counsels of Perfection," as they have been called, are something more than man's duty.[1] They are for such as would be perfect and aim at the sublime heights of saint-hood. Those vows of celibacy, of poverty, and of unhesitating obedience to Church superiors, resulted

[1] Cf. Dorner, *Christian Ethics*, § 21.

in a monastic system that injured alike morality and religion. By such works of supererogation the Church of Rome acquired that store of merits which she was able to transfer to others by the sale of indulgences. When it was taught that a saintly love is superior to the moral law, and leads into more tender relations to God than the law demands, the latter was eviscerated of its contents, and licence rushed into the sphere which love had left for a higher zone of service.

Besides, when the moral law is reduced to a mere "counsel," its authority is for ever gone. Unless it speak with the tone of an imperative, its power over men has vanished. The history of Catholicism shows this. Its peculiar system of casuistry springs out of its deficient conception of the binding and unconditional character of the universal principle of ethics. The Protestant Fathers disliked the whole system of casuistry. In their minds it was connected with erroneous ethics. And the association was not favourable to the study of Christian character.

But if our forefathers might be excused for their comparative ignoring of this most important subject, no such reason can be any longer urged in palliation of further neglect. The whole trend of thought to-day is in favour of the cultivation of the ethical

side of the Christian life. Our ideal of progress is inseparable from such an aim. We repeat the words of Professor Green, quoted in the opening page: "The spiritual progress of mankind is an unmeaning phrase, unless it means a progress of personal character and to personal character."

Some hints may be got on this subject from classical writers. Character was meant, though the word was not used, when Socrates observed that there was something finer in great men than anything they ever said. Aristotle contributed much to the development of one important part of it in his full treatment of the value and operation of Habit (*Eth.*, book ii. chap. iii.). One of his pupils, Theophrastus, wrote a book containing a description of some thirty imaginary people, illustrating some vice or weakness in their character, and doubtless photographing well-known Athenians of his time. From Epicurus and the Stoics little is got. The refined egoism of the one and the self-sufficingness of the other were unfavourable to a right conception of character. Seneca repeats the Stoics' position, and says some fine things about the wise man in his independence of all external goods. But the moral energy that lies at the basis of character is ignored. Marcus Aurelius has also given expression to some beautiful sentiments about the character of the wise man.

But he, too, advises him to withdraw from a world hurrying on to moral dissolution into the inner realm of spirit and reason. The dominant idea is not love and service, but stoical self-sufficiency. His words are weighty; but he cannot point to a power to build up man into a complete character.

The subject is not discussed by the Fathers further than that they are careful to present Christ as the one true pattern of character. The asceticism that later on crept into the Church presented to the men and women of its time the ideal of virginity or monasticism, the result being that its ethic embraces little else than a series of rubrics for every minute duty of the monastic life. The contemplative life is praised, and the good man must conquer the flesh by much fasting and penance.

The result was that for those who would be perfect there were presented the Evangelical Counsels and works of supererogation. They are not necessary, but they are commendable. This optional excellence, so commended by Aquinas, is to be reached through the vows of obedience to the ecclesiastical superior, which involve the total suppression of personal freedom and renunciation of all earthly goods. In a Church where superlative degrees of virtue were recognised as above and beyond the first and great

commandment, there could be set forth, as we said above, only an impoverished conception of Christian character.

In modern times this subject has received more notice. English moralists have emphasised many of the qualities of Character, and have enforced the value of Habit. This is more especially true of the Scottish Philosophy. Much that is valuable regarding the elements of Character and its vital connection with Conduct will be found in the pages of Reid, Hamilton, Stewart, and Fleming. Mr. Samuel Bailey considers this subject a branch of anthropology, and treats of some parts of it in his *Letters on the Human Mind*. Dr. Alexander Bain published in 1861 a volume *On the Study of Character*. He criticises the phrenology of Gall and Combe, and finds in it an incomplete diagnosis of character, taking cognisance only of original or innate tendencies. Dr. Bain dwells much on the influence of environment and of culture.

Recent writers on ethics have made other contributions to the subject. Those who are familiar with the course of modern thought in this field will understand how the authors who borrow their inspiration from Kant in Germany, and from such teachers as the late Professor Green of Oxford, have naturally emphasised the End of Life as an ideal of character, as Being rather than Doing. They have given its

proper place to an idea which may be said to have been a discovery of the nineteenth century,—the idea of growth and of evolution. While not accepting the utilitarian moral standard as modified by the leading exponents of biological evolution, they have forcibly shown how the idea of development is applicable to the moral life, and that it is essentially an *organic* growth, rather than a mechanism. And this ethical progress is not a mere result of adjustment to environment, determined from without, but involves a distinct conscious reference to an end—an end which is neither self-sacrifice nor self-pleasure, but is more properly defined as self-realisation.[1]

But it is when we come to the modern subject of Christian Ethics that we find the existence and value of Christian Character fully recognised. Even there it is by some writers only briefly treated, and under other names. But the later authors give increasing attention to it. Harless discusses it under the head of the "Practical Realisation of Christian Piety." Wuttke, in his second volume, treats it very cursorily. In the first volume of Bishop Martensen's *Christian Ethics* a few very suggestive pages are devoted to it. It is

[1] I need mention only such works as Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, Royce's *Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, Edward Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, and the recent Manuals of Ethics issued for students by Professors Dewey, Mackenzie, Muirhead, and James Seth.

there connected with sanctification and the imitation of Christ. Many of the elements of it are treated more fully in the second volume on *Individual Ethics*. Dr. Isaac Dorner adequately recognises its value, and devotes attention to its genesis, its subsistence, and its self-development. He is the first to perceive the real importance of the subject, and to give it its proper or central place in his *Christian Ethics*. It is not recognised in his excellent work on Ethics by Dr. Newman Smyth; but the Christian Conscience is there looked at in a broad way which practically includes the development of character. In vol. ii. of Oettingen's *Moralstatistic und Sittenlehre*, there are some valuable contributions to the subject under the headings of Individuality, Liberty, and Determinism (pp. 397, 403, 407). Professor Jules Bovon, of the Faculty of Theology in Lausanne, in his *Morale Chrétienne*, of which the first volume was published in 1897, devotes considerable attention to the subject under the duties of the spiritual life. He holds that the basis of character is found in temperament and inherited disposition, and that the rest of it is the work of the individual Christian, who gets these endowments that he may through prayer and spiritual effort mark his moral being with a seal of higher originality. "Through regeneration a man comes back to himself, and finds himself again in

giving himself to God." In a Bible Class Primer by the Rev. T. B. Kilpatrick, D.D., the essential features of Christian character have been briefly described, and the means of its culture excellently enforced. Dr. T. Munger, in a booklet on the *Inspiration of Character*, has some excellent remarks on the motive power that helps to build up character. And Professor Davidson of Aberdeen, in his *Handbook of Christian Ethics*, very lucidly in one of the sections discusses Christian Character.[1]

II

What guidance may we look for in this matter from the Word of God?

In the Old Testament we have many instances of noble men who lived and walked with God. They learned the great art of self-control; and, yielding themselves to God's guidance, they became His authorised servants and ministers to Israel. His design was to select men from among His people, and to show in them what heights of attainment might be reached by those who lived in touch with Him.

[1] Since the publication of the first edition of this volume several excellent books on Christian Character have been published: notably, *Christian Character*, by J. R. Illingworth, somewhat incomplete; and *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character*, by Professor Peabody, full of scriptural teaching.

To some extent they were taken into His counsel, and taught to move and work along the great lines of redemptive purpose. And thus Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Daniel, and others stand out of the dim mists of that early prime as heroes of faith and models of character. But they are never held up as men of impeccable virtue, and their many failings are not only frankly confessed, but are prominently set forth. In some respects they are clearly intended to act rather as beacons than as examples. In His loving patience God did not demand only perfect agents to accomplish His purpose, but made use of fallible men, so that by their help He might lead His people on to the goal of a perfect morality.

Moreover, it is clear that in much of the discipline these men underwent God was burning in, and making permanent, the moral colours that made their old age so beautiful. The rash ardour of the youthful Moses was disciplined into patient meekness. The terrible sin of David led him through an experience of Divine forgiveness that helped him to write the truest and sweetest of our songs of penitence. The moral mistakes of these men, and the temporal penalties that followed, contributed largely to the training of Israel in righteous character.[1]

[1] This subject is discussed at length in the author's *Ethics of the Old Testament*, chap. xv. (T. & T. Clark.)

Still more important for our purpose is it to find that there arose in the Old Testament time a school that devoted much thought to this subject of ours. The Wisdom Literature, including the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, and some of the Psalms, was the outcome of much reflection on the world of men and things. It sought to understand the action of God in history and in human life, and thereby to define duties and guide conduct. Here ceremonies and offerings are not enforced as they were under the pedagogy of the Law; but the great virtues of justice, temperance, continence, kindness, and uprightness are strikingly emphasised.[1]

The subjective principle of this Wisdom is "the fear of the Lord." This is not a superstitious dread of an Iron Fate, but the fear of offending the loving and holy One, whose only interest is His people's good. From this moral fountain flows the stream of conduct that shall bring long life and prosperity. The wise man will be humble and pitiful. He will not look at the "strange woman," nor give his company to wine-bibbers and gluttons. Much is said by the Wise Man on the value of discreet speech

[1] On the subject of the Wisdom Literature, see Schultz, *Alttest. Theologie*, p. 632; Oehler's *Old Testament Theology* (Day's edition), p. 152; the volumes by Prof. T. Davison and A. B. Davidson; Dean's *Book of Wisdom*, chap. i; Wellhausen's *Die Pharisäer und die Sadducäer.*

and the control of the tongue. The vain man's weakness is exposed, and pride of purse is warned of its certain fall. Industry is highly commended, and the picture of the sluggard is drawn in large lines. The contrast between the idle gossip and the virtuous woman is a very powerful one. And the finest piece of character-sketching in the Word of God is the description of the ideal woman and wife in the 31st chapter of Proverbs.

But it is when we pass from the limitations of a partial and progressive revelation *to the full-orbed revelation of the New Testament*, that we find the true lineaments of Christian character portrayed. Here both the legal spirit and the eudæmonism of the older economy are absent; and the wide horizons of Christianity afford full scope for the exercise of both the love and the justice of God. The Son of God has become incarnate. The one perfect type of manhood has passed across the stage of history. Amid the most severe tests of poverty, hostility, and suffering, He has wrought

> "With human hands the creed of creeds,
> In loveliness of perfect deeds,
> More strong than all poetic thought."

He has not destroyed but fulfilled the morality of the Old Testament. The ethics of both Testaments have

been linked into a solidarity of life and interest. If we estimate the character of patriarchs and judges in relation to their moral environment and the stage of revelation then reached, we judge the saints of the New Testament by the standard of the Perfect Pattern, the Son of Man.

Now Jesus Christ, in the very beginning of His ministry, expounds the laws and the life of the kingdom of God. The Sermon on the Mount opens with the Beatitudes, which describe the virtues that ensure the blessing of Heaven. The Model Prayer, which follows, asking that God's kingdom may come, and His will be done in earth as in heaven, is a prayer of moral consecration on the lips of every petitioner. The Highest Good of life is to be reached by a thoroughly ethical process. Whatever offends is to be sacrificed, dear though it be as a right hand or a right eye. The moral ideal is an absolute one—"Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Moral Philosophy can never surpass this comprehensive generalisation of duty, for it is the perfection of man according to his type, and in consonance with the highest conception of his being.

Besides, this type of perfection, realised in Christ and appropriated by faith, is no mere abstract generality, but is inspired with the glow of personal love. God is perfect love as well as perfect law, and

in being like Him men will find the true end of their existence. The life thus lived will be life at its highest level, and will reach its largest possibilities. All good things will be given to them that seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. *The perfection of personal life in communion with God* is Jesus' conception of the highest moral good. If we are to master the science of life, and possess a true Christian character, we must patiently and closely study the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. And, as we shall afterwards discover, it is in His death for us and His work in us that we find the dynamic of duty and the only sufficient motive power of the Christian life.[1]

Nor, for this purpose, shall we neglect the Apostolic Proclamation of the gospel that followed Pentecost. The first stage of that proclamation is represented by the Epistle of James, which is of a predominantly practical character, and would test a true faith by its outcome in good works. The Pauline teaching emphasises the freedom of sonship to God as opposed to legal bondage and to the slavery of evil habits. The new relationship of adoption has put a period to the bondage of the letter, and the Spirit of Christ is the power of a new life. Yet, lest this liberty should run into licence,

[1] Cf. Peabody, *Jesus Christ and Christian Character*, chap. ii.

the apostle is careful to annex to the doctrinal teaching of each Epistle some principles of practical guidance for the corresponding life. The love of Christ will be sure to unfold itself into a multiplicity of virtues, and become active in Christian service. The grand principle of victory over sin is laid down in Rom. viii. The Pauline Epistles are also valuable for their clear presentation of the pedagogic value of the Law as having its necessary time and place in the moral order of a Christian's experience.

Both Pauline and Petrine Epistles contain much ethical teaching of the highest value in relation to family life and the sacredness of marriage. They give directions as to the acquisition and enjoyment of property and the spirit in which it should be held. And both in the Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles we may see how Christians are to adapt themselves to, and uphold, social order and to pursue their secular calling.

The latest teaching of the New Testament is the Johannine. In St. John's Gospel and Epistles we trace a distinct advance in application to life of the truths of Christianity. There is a more profound comprehension of the cosmical significance of the gospel: his broadening experience has brought him into new relations with men of various nationalities. And we trace signs in his Epistles of increasing

firmness in measuring the value of the Christian virtues, and in estimating conduct as the outcome of character.

All these writings become to us ethically normative by virtue of their direct reflection of the mind of the Master. As the first-fruits of the Spirit of the risen Lord they have regulative power for life and morals.

In all these stages of revelation there is, amid variety of presentation, perfect unity of ethical teaching. The highest and the most comprehensive idea of Christian character is found within the pages of the New Testament. That character ought to be advancing in beauty and completeness with the continual spiritual life and progressive consciousness of sin. But it will never advance beyond the type set forth in the Gospels, nor will it have any power of progressive attainment apart from the cleansing Spirit of God. It is the Holy Spirit in the heart that is the continuous power and energy in the upbuilding of Christian character.

Before the Christian Church to-day lie many unfinished ethical problems awaiting solution. And there are greater works of faith yet to be done ere the kingdom of God be established on the earth and the many crowns put upon Messiah's head. For the accomplishment of these great tasks the

Church needs men of strong Christian character and devoted lives,—men who are at their moral best, and who rightly represent the religion of Christ. The time is full of hope. More light is breaking forth from the Word of God on these modern life-problems. The Spirit of God is not only with us personally, but He is also with us (as He was not with the early disciples) in the Christian customs of society, and in the Christian laws and liberties of our nation. He is with us too in what we may call the spiritual inheritance of the Christian family, into which many of us have entered.

In all these spheres the moral force of God's Spirit has entered our life to perfect our Christian character and to help us thereby to work out the regeneration of modern society.

III

Before proceeding to investigate the methods of forming Christian character, we are met *in limine* by *objections* that we cannot overlook. We hear voices that ask: Can character be formed and moulded by ourselves? Is it not something inborn, and therefore unalterable? Is not change of character beyond the range of volition? Are not men everywhere governed by their temperament, and

determined by their disposition? Do we not forecast the action of men by our knowledge of their fixed character?

In answer we have to say that without doubt character is relatively fixed. Choice does depend on character, and when I know a man's character I may safely predict his action. In every scheme for the amelioration of the wretched I can safely count on the sympathy of sincere and kind Christians, while I anticipate the opposition or indifference of the stingy and the selfish.

But this truth is abused if it is perverted into meaning that because choice depends upon character, therefore a man can never change his course of conduct. Character is a man's self. Yet we can never systematise the whole of the raw material of disposition and temperament into character; so that to the end character and self are never quite coincident. There will remain "underground longings and appetites" that have not been conquered by the habituated self. In the nature of the most depraved these have sprung up and made reformation possible, as the biographies of John Bunyan and John Newton prove.

In working among the very lowest classes I have found in all of them a certain possibility of conceiving higher ideals of what they would be. When

these pictures of a better life were put before them, I have observed how the gleam of the eye and the trickling tear of penitence proved the presence of a possibility to leave their present life and struggle after the ideal, far above them no doubt, yet felt to be realisable.

We grant that every man is limited by his individuality, and that this will give the ethical ideal a different complexion as viewed through the windows of his own soul. But for each man, artist, soldier, poet, preacher, there is an Ideal, an Ought-to-be; and there is the power of choosing it or of refusing it.

If it were not so, all progress and reformation would be impossible, and character would instantly become stereotyped. But with every free agent there remains the power to create a character. And there abides the possibility that, if the gracious aid of God's Spirit be accepted and every right influence brought to bear, the bent of character may be changed. He that is "not far from the kingdom of God" may stand within it. "The Great Refusal" of the young nobleman, let us not forget, was a refusal; and Dante's lines contain the implicit truth that, had that young spirit chosen otherwise, Jesus might have rejoiced over a disciple, instead of mourning over one who came up to the door of a new

He and put his finger on the latch, and then went away sorrowful.

> "Let us not always say,
> 'Spite of this flesh to-day
> I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!
> As the bird wings and sings,
> Let us cry, 'All good things
> Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!'"

Another objection to the cultivation of character is based on what is called the biological law of heredity. Men, they say, are not responsible for much of what passes as vice. The criminal, like the poet, is born not made; or, at least he inherits more of his character than he can ever make of it. There seems to be in certain families and races an instinctive tendency to evil. This is inherited, as much as phthisis or heart-disease. Individual peculiarities and vices are transmitted to such an extent that crime ought to be viewed as a disease, and therefore treated pathologically.

We shall afterwards discuss the question of heredity in its bearing upon character. All the facts are not yet known. But it is clear that even if a brutal objection to the above form to hold good, it would be impossible to maintain any ground of moral judgment. It would be equivalent to a virtual denial of responsibility. In every effort

at reformation we must make an appeal to the agent himself. Every legal judgment, no less than every judgment of society upon a man, will be effective only when he himself comes to endorse the justice of that judgment. Punishment that has no ethical basis will never be deterrent or educative. Unless it touch a man's moral feeling, waken his dormant conscience, and make the criminal see the justice of the law that deprives him of his liberty, it can have no abiding influence.

Were this objection against the education of character to hold good, then the only hope for humanity would be in the formation and conservation of the better tendencies by a material process. Degeneration would be arrested by a system of careful selection which would, in Galton's words, "build up a good breed of human animals." This scientific method of moral culture, by the simple process of removing all those from society who are unable to improve the stock and augment the good qualities of the breed, is so contrary to the humanitarian and equalising aspirations of the age, that, apart from its very doubtful results, it has little chance of being accepted. It springs out of a theory of descent which affirms in the boldest terms the impossibility of equality.[1] It amounts, as M. E.

[1] Cf. Häckel's *Freie Wissenschaft und freie Lehre*, pp. 71–78.

de Laveleye has shown, to a "social predestination" which closes the gateways of progress to all but the exceptionally talented. It ignores the possible divergence of type of character and the mental and moral differentiation without which nations can never advance. And its conception of moral evolution is by a mechanical process which binds the aspiring soul in the chains of physical necessity, against which it is hopeless to struggle, and the operation of which it seems impossible to comprehend.[1]

Notwithstanding the strong language of these writers, this biological law is still a matter of much dispute. But even granting that the transmission of acquired characteristics were proved, this fact would not in any way destroy the moral consciousness. Man is much more than protoplasm or germ-cell, more than a mere complex of inherited tendencies, more than a mosaic of parental and grandparental characteristics. Dramatists of the Ibsen school have gone wild over heredity, and represent its operation in their *dramatis personæ* as of the most ruthless kind.[2] It is made the apology for their vices and the all-sufficient explanation of

[1] Cf. Ribot, *Heredity*, p. 190.

[2] See Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*; and especially his *Ghosts*, in which heredity is the sole *deus ex machina*.

their mad careers. But if man is not only a "combination of inherited aptitudes and faculties," but is also conscience and will; if within him there be an absolute imperative able to prohibit any breach of its commands, and to vindicate them when they are violated, and also a will to choose a consciously conceived ideal of life,—then is he responsible for every one of his acts. Then is it possible for him to choose the "universe of desire" in which he is to live, and to organise his natural impulses into character.

Against all such objections to our subject we maintain that the one characteristic of man, of which he may well be proud, is responsibility. And while many of the interests of the science of to-day seem to be bound up with the denial of it, and with the assertion of Determinism (a "fairer name" for Necessity), the famous saying of Kant is as full of significance as ever, that freedom is the postulate of morality.

Incessantly we sow and weave and sew our unseen garment, which unlike our outer garment, can never be cast aside. Because it is immortal with our life, and is our soul, we will shall be revealed, when after having clothed the material body, it shall have entered ... Evelyn Underwood

We receive ourselves as the spider does its web, out of its own entrails, if I might so say. We release it, and we clothe it, and we eat it, and we select it, and then we put it on and wear it. It is the self, and yet it is a kind of protection and making visible of the self the instinct which is last found the hardest part of the brain. —Dr. A. Tredgold

God cannot make man's love
Without love me to help Him.

Slaves are they who seek their wages, but they must have the right to come to the foot of life and not count it by the grave into the ... —St. Louis Q. F.

As sometimes in a fair human face
To those who watch it more and more,
A likeness undiscerned before
Comes out to some one of the race.

—Tennyson

CHAPTER III

What is Character?

Ethics is the science of Conduct, but of conduct which always refers back to Character. It is from character that it gets its value and its explanation. The moral ideal is an ideal of character. To realise that ideal is the chief end of life. And this is only another way of affirming that the chief end of life is to attain the true type of Self-hood. The grand purpose of life is neither self-sacrifice nor self-pleasure, but self-realisation. It is neither to win pleasure nor gain knowledge nor do good, but to be good. The "being" will enrich the "doing," and the character will give worth to the conduct.

How then is this character which finds its exponent in conduct to be reached? Is it attained by the natural process of evolution? Is it a result, as many affirm, of adjustment to environment? Or is it not rather a certain type of self-hood, a moral and spiritual ideal, which the man who is environed has clearly, or at least consciously, perceived?

If we were to treat character after the manner of the Evolutionists, we should make it a branch of Biology. But believing, as we do, that the real significance of conduct arises from its being the expression of the inner man, we must of necessity interpret conduct as something more than a series of biological and mechanical phenomena. Any interpretation of it that claims to be truly ethical must be based upon the totally different view of the outward activities of life as being the index of the character that is within. To discuss character under the categories of biology would be to indulge in metaphors, and it would be as unscientific as it would be deceptive.

We do not wish to shut our eyes to the benefit that may be got by observing and classifying facts of evolution. Everything is best known in its genesis and becoming. It is useful to know how man has emerged from savage life through successive stages into the moral life of to-day. But our aim is far higher and more practical than the pursuit of the historical method. It is to discover the true ideal of character for the men of to-day. It is with the living man himself in his inmost being that we have to do. We wish to define for him the end of his life, and show him how to actualise his ideal. And the true self, the man within the man, can never be

reduced to such a uniformity as that to which physical science has reduced the phenomena of nature.

In discussing character, we must first of all find out the raw material out of which it is built up. The structure of virtuous manhood is a building, or, to use a Pauline term, an edifice. We must therefore investigate its psychological foundation to discover what impulses, feelings, volitions, enter into it and make its totality; whether it includes both the rational and the sentient nature; and how it is modified *ab extra* by influences from ancestry, temperament, and nationality.

Previous to this, however, it will be useful to look at the etymology of the word itself.

I. ETYMOLOGY OF CHARACTER

Language has been characterised as fossil poetry. It may be as correctly said to be fossil ethics. Many a word embodies in its structure the moral sentiments of mankind. Although it would be dangerous in ethics to found a theory on etymology, yet the history of this word is full of interest.

The word Character is one that contains a witness to moral truth. The man who first used the Greek word χαρακτήρ in our sense of it had in his mind's eye the impression made by the seal upon wax. He

saw how the soft melted wax took on the exact outline of the seal, and reproduced its image or inscription. Through this word that image has become our inheritance. Character is the moral self which is moulded by the power of thoughts and ideas, of temperament and constitution, of loves and hates. All these go to the shaping and colouring of a man's character. They have all some part in producing that final type of self, that ultimate habit of will, into which the man's whole activities at last shape themselves.

The word is employed in books in a variety of meanings. Many writers use it as synonymous with personality. Some, on the other hand, make it exchangeable with individuality. Others seem to think that it is a word that may be conveniently used for temperament. But it is advisable to keep the word to its true significance. My character *is my moral self*, the self that includes feelings, motives, and volitions, *the all-unifying, self-realising, moral subject*. I know that I am something more than a transient emotion sweeping across the stage of existence. I am confident that I am something different from a stream of nervous affections. My character is my moralised Self, embracing all my natural and instinctive affections, all my mental and moral endowments, the whole frame of mind, temper, and disposition

from which I act in one manner rather than in another. The word points to those individual traits of taste, temperament, and moral strength that differentiate one man from another man.

Thus between nature and character the distinction is clear. Character is nature and nurture. It is nature cultured and disciplined, so that natural tendencies are brought under the sway of the moral motive. His natural individuality marks off a man from his fellows by clear and specific differences. But this individuality may be non-moral. To produce character it must be brought under discipline, and organised into the structure of a true moral being.[1]

Still less must character be confounded with temperament. The latter should be confined to denoting the bodily and physical qualities that are peculiar to individuals. Temperament is largely, if not altogether, an inheritance. It is the natural, fundamental mood in which every man begins life, and to which he invariably tends to return. It is peculiar to families and even to nations; and doubtless is influenced by environment. But character has a psychological as well as a temperamental basis. It embraces the whole man, body,

[1] See *Burnett Lectures* by Professor Davidson, p. 325; Professor J. Seth's *Study of Ethical Principles*, chap. i.; Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, § 20.

mind, and spirit; and it is not alone the gift of heredity. Above all, it includes a choice, a *settled habit* or *bent of will*, so that it can be seen in its outcome in conduct. Character takes up the raw material of nature and temperament, and it weaves these into the strong, well-knit texture of a fully moralised manhood.

Emerson has written some brilliant essays on character, and Carlyle has frequently used the term in a somewhat Emersonian sense. "The force," says Emerson, "which character bears to me is self-sufficingness. I revere the person who is riches. I cannot think of him as alone or unhappy, but as a perpetual patron, benefactor, and beatified man. Character is centrality, the impossibility of being displaced or arrested by circumstances." But this is rather a definition of the hero than of character. Even of the heroic men whom Emerson mentions in his essay, it would not be correct to say that self-sufficingness was the pre-eminent quality in their character. Washington is one of them; and we may surely say that his disinterested goodness, his conscientiousness and humility, were inconsistent with self-sufficingness. He was resourceful, brave, and strong-willed. But it does not detract from his fine character to know that he craved for sympathy and companionship, and continually sought the gracious

help of God. He was, says Emerson, "a great positive quantity. He gives me a sense of mass." But surely quality was his even more than quantity. A strong will alone does not constitute character.

When Emerson goes on to say, "this masterpiece (character) is best when no hands but nature's are laid on it," he confounds character with originality. In our modern civilisation men doubtless get their individual traits very much rubbed down, so that the French epigram gives point to a fact we all deplore, "Born a man, died a grocer." But nature's hands alone will not create a masterpiece of character, though they may produce an original genius.

Character is more than mere strength of will, or a certain type of personality, or an unusual combination of talents. It embraces all these; they are the original materials on which it works. But character is the ripe fruit of moral effort, and cannot be otherwise attained.

And Christian Character is this moralised man renewed by the grace of God, sanctified, and filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Man from the beginning exists for moral and spiritual ends; he is made to be moralised and spiritualised. His body is clearly designed to be the instrument of his spirit, and that spirit in turn to be the instrument of the Holy Spirit. Our conception of the Christian man

is that he be morally Christlike. He has reached the end of his being, when, putting off the old man, he puts on the new man, and is renewed after the image of Jesus Christ. A life that is devitalised by the lawless working of sin has missed its end, and at best can be but a fragment, a torso, an incompleteness. Our duty finds its sufficient dynamic and our manhood its moral vitality, only when the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death.

II. THE CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS OF CHARACTER

If character be the crown of the moral life, the exposition of character must be based upon the nature of man. We must, therefore, find a psychological basis for character. It was Bishop Butler who pointed out that we cannot discuss the question of the moral life without first solving the problem of the nature and constitution of man.

Man is a complex being, and body, mind, and spirit all go to the making of his manhood. The true moral life is a life of the total Self, and not of a fractional part of his being. Therefore, if we would know character in its entirety, we must know human nature in its wholeness.

Psychology tells us that the mental or spiritual side of man has at least three properties or functions by means of which our experience is built up. There is Intelligence or Thought, comprising such powers as Reason, Judgment, Imagination, Memory, Perception. There is Feeling, inclusive of all pains and pleasures, sensations and emotions. There is Volition or will-power, productive of the actions that result from these emotions. One man is strongly endowed on the side of Intelligence. A clear mind, a well-balanced judgment, a fine imagination, lend colour to his character, and tend to shape his career. Another is distinguished more by depth of feeling than by strength of judgment; and this, coupled with imagination, will probably produce the genius and character of a Dante or a Milton. These qualities are mingled in very different proportions in individuals; and according as one or other predominates in the mental constitution, will the character to a certain extent be coloured. One will also modify another; and a powerful reason will tend to keep in check the rush of feeling. A strong will may, by a neutralising volition, overcome the urgency of some pain, and reduce it to the state of a mere emotion to be patiently endured.

By means of the will man passes from an intel-

lectual state into act and deed. And these activities of the mind are not merely isolated movements; they become links in a series of actions and acquire permanence. The agent throws himself into these acts; and *in the exercise of knowing and willing he becomes characterised by his own deeds.* The more frequently he does the act, the more easy and pleasurable does it become. And this blending of pleasure and volition creates that tendency or bias towards doing it that we denominate Habit. Therefore it is that we have spoken of character as a habit of will. Habit is so important in the formation of character that we shall devote a chapter to the way in which good habits may be gained and strengthened.

Man has a moral as well as a mental constitution, and in considering the elements that go to form character we must not omit the moral feeling. This moral feeling forms the foundation on which the development and culture of conscience rest. It exists antecedently to morality, and indeed it is the necessary ground of all ethical advance. It is in the emotion excited by the perception of worth that there lies the foundation of all moral development. It is the possession of this moral sensibility that enables a man to perceive the excellence of goodness and truth, and it lies at the root of all

moral impulse and progress. On this basis the moral process is initiated which ultimately lifts man above the plane of nature, and issues in moral freedom and in the imperative of Conscience.[1] The culture of Conscience we shall find to be of the utmost importance in the upbuilding of character. And the Christian conscience is so positive and powerful a factor in this work, that we must devote special attention to this organ of revelation, and to the Scriptural method of training it.

But, while all these elements enter into character, they would not of themselves account for the great diversity in this respect found among men. Our mental and moral constitution is powerfully affected by our bodily organism. These distinctions of physical organisation help to swell the abundance of variety manifested in character.

The first and most prominent physical distinction is that of Sex. It is one that lies at the root of all other differences, and it forms the actual basis of the social structure. The nature of woman is *sui generis*. It is unfit for the restless activity of public life, and is more suited to the duties and engagements of home. When woman mingles in the bustle of party strife or enters the arena of politics, she is very apt to degenerate and become

[1] Dorner, *Christian Ethics*, § 19.

unwomanly. Man employs himself more with the things of the outer than of the inner life, and is independent of his native soil. His instinct is freedom, and his vocation leads him abroad into the world-wide arena of contest and commerce, where he seeks to manage and control affairs. But woman is at home in the region of feeling and affection, and she finds her highest vocation in the cultivation of those loves and sympathies that make home the dearest spot on earth.

We are far from meaning to affirm that the differences that divide the sexes are merely physical. They are also psychical and reach into the region of mind and desire, and go down to the very roots of character. Man's aggressive activity cannot fail to colour his disposition. It leads him to live largely in the realm of will, and tends to develop pertinacity and self-assertion. Whereas the receptive nature of woman manifests itself rather in patient endurance and tender devotion to the service of loved ones. Her emotions dominate her intellect; her judgment to a certain extent is biased by her feelings. On the other hand, where moral as well as intellectual considerations come into view, woman's judgment is likely to be as just as that of man, whose decisions are frequently based on grounds of reason alone.

Not less than by sex is character affected by another diversity in our physical constitution known as *Temperament.* The etymology of this word embalms an old theory of medicine now quite exploded. It refers to the proper mixture, the due tempering (κράσεις, *temperamentum*, mixture) of what were believed to be the four chief humours of the body. These were the bile, the blood, the water, the phlegm; from the admixture of which it was believed all temperaments arose, and on the due proportions of which the right disposition depended.[1] He who was so unfortunate as to have these humours improperly compounded, was spoken of as suffering from a "distemper." This word has changed its meaning. But, like an old coin with a worn inscription, it carries the history of its origin on its face, and tells the story of its birth into the ethical world.

Some physicians have regarded the Temperaments simply as morbid conditions of the body, to be cured by a proper attention to the conditions of health and by a careful selection of food. So much did this view prevail, that for some time in this country the subject was deemed by moralists unworthy of consideration.

[1] Cf. Lotze's *Mikrokosmos*, ii. p. 362; also *Die Temperamente des Menschen* of Theod. v. Haupt; and Dorner's *Christian Ethics*,

But of late, and especially in relation to the subject of conduct, the temperaments have been much studied. The more we have come to recognise the close connection of mind with body, the more have we come to estimate at its real worth everything connected with the physical constitution.

It may be that some writers on Ethics, especially in Germany, have exaggerated the importance of these so-called "complexions"; yet it cannot be gainsaid that the theory is supported by a large array of facts. The temperature of a man's blood will affect his view of the external world, and will lend a colour even to his conceptions of duty. It will elevate him to heights of hopefulness, or cast him down into the melancholy dungeons of Giant Despair. It may ruin him past recovery; or it may lead him forward to brave deeds and to generous achievements. That there is a very large realm of truth in this theory, seems to us undeniable.

While the full treatment of the subject belongs to physiology, yet so many of the grounds of individuality are found in the psychical and corporeal nature, that, in considering the question of character, we shall have to devote considerable attention to the Christian use and control of temperament.

III. INFLUENCES THAT AFFECT AND MODIFY CHARACTER

(a) *Nationality and Environment*

The temperaments tend to become permanent in individuals and in families. And, as they extend, they become characteristic of clans, of races, and of nationalities. The character of Jacob, as delineated in the Book of Genesis, is that of a typical Jew with an eye to the main chance, adroit and clever, yet full of affection for his family. The main features of Ishmael are to this day found in his descendants. We may thus discover illustrations of the fundamental moods of human nature in the various races that now people the globe. The French exhibit the fickleness for which their progenitors in Galatia were reproved by St. Paul. The Germans exhibit the solidarity and diligence which have made the nation famous. The American and the English have each their own character, well-marked and individualised. And, on a larger scale, the Orientals have temperamental features very different from the children of the Occident.

Some have gone the length of affirming that the Caucasian race manifest the choleric temperament, the Mongolian the melancholic, the Ethiopian the

phlegmatic, and the Polynesian the sanguine temperament. This is not altogether borne out by facts. But it is an ascertained fact that the Europeans as a whole have more of the energetic temperaments than Asiatics, and that amongst ourselves the Celtic portion of the nation exhibit a vehement and excitable temperament, while the English people are more steady and equable.[1]

It is inevitable that the child, born into a birthright of tradition, and surrounded by an atmosphere of national sentiment, should exhibit the characteristics of the clan or tribe from which he springs. He sucks in national prejudices with his mother's milk. All this connects him by most intimate ties with his people, and also provides a certain qualification by which he fulfils his part in accomplishing the destiny of his race. Such national sentiments help him to obey the call of patriotism, and thus the nation is enabled to fulfil its mission. But, on the other hand, these prejudices created by birth and consanguinity have afterwards to be overcome; and the individual must strive to help his race or tribe to add its quota to the improvement of humanity. It may not be desirable for the Italian

[1] Cf. *Revue Celtique*, vol. vi. p. 395 ff., and K. von Becker's *Versuch einer Lösung der Celtenfrage* (1883), p. 114.

entirely to eradicate his romantic disposition, or the Frenchman his volatility. Both the Italians and the French have exercised a useful influence in their national capacity; and they should exert this same influence as individual citizens. Yet the kingdom of God is wide enough to embrace all nationalities; and it is desirable that all national prejudices be subordinated, and that men should learn to recognise their oneness before God in a community of nature and of need. The races thus organised and endowed go to constitute the solidarity of humanity and form its harmonious whole. All are needed to fulfil the great purpose of Providence.

It has also been remarked how the geographical position of a nation has moulded its type of character in many ways. The flat marshes of Boeotia were believed by the Greeks to engender a sluggish disposition unfavourable to mental progress. On the other hand, mountainous countries like Switzerland and the Highlands of Scotland always seem to create a fervour for freedom, a courage and independence, that have made their tribes the most patriotic defenders of their liberties the world has ever seen. But the influence of geographical environment is small in comparison with that of family and of race.

(b) *Heredity*

Among the influences visibly affecting and strongly moulding character stands Heredity. There is no doubt that we are born into a heritage of accumulated results, and that in our physical framework we largely reflect our ancestry. Our past looks out upon us in the features of the face and in every curve of the body ; possibly also in some of the moods of our mind, begotten of an inherited temperament. In many personal traits we perpetuate the manners of our ancestors, and we transmit to our children these congenital characteristics. As to this point, it may be said, all biologists are agreed. The stable constitutional qualities of parents and grandparents descend to children.[1]

But is it the fact, as some biologists maintain, that *acquired qualities also descend*? Are individual peculiarities and attainments, acquired by the parent as the result of changes in function and environment, also transmitted? The skill of the artist, the fine touch and trained eye of the painter and sculptor, do they reappear in the offspring? One could wish that they might: for, in this respect, heredity, if it were

[1] Harelip, cleft-palate, and colour-blindness have been known to descend to six generations in males: deaf-mutism to three generations.

proved to be a law, would possess inestimable value.

It seems an admitted fact that functional variations do reappear in families. But whether they reappear by transmission, or because the conditions still exist which first brought them about in some grandparental stage, is a fact not easily determined.

Kant was one of the first to express a strong disbelief in the transmissibility of these acquired qualities. Blumenbach also assumes, with some conditions, the same negative position. And Weismann, whose writings have produced such a powerful effect on the minds of scientists, has now pronounced himself sceptical of such transmission. He can find no proof that acquired qualities are ever bequeathed to offspring.[1]

Many biologists maintain that the drunkard transmits to his children the terrible craving which, with him, has gone beyond a moral weakness and become a physical disease. But we think that the evidence is conflicting. In short, all that we can with assurance say, is that the stable elements in our constitution are transmitted, and that children are

[1] Cf. Weismann's *Essays*, vol. i. chap. i. (ed. 1891), and also his *Germ-Plasm: A Theory of Heredity* (1893); C. Nägeli, *Mechanisch-physiolog. Theorie der Abstammungslehre* (ed. 1884); R. Virchow, *Descendenz und Pathologie* (1886). Herbert Spencer criticises Weismann in his *Factors of Organic Evolution* (1886).

born with very different mental and physical endowments.

It is not the mind of the Creator that each man should become all that another may attain to. The variety in aptitude, taste, and gifts mental and physical, points to a moral mission for each in conformity with his endowment. He will not be held responsible for accomplishing that for which he has no aptitude. He will be responsible only for the due cultivation of his own gift, which has its place and value in the moral organism.

Note.—The intimate relation between Heredity and Character points to the duty of informing the popular mind as to the extreme undesirability of parentage on the part of those burdened with congenital defects or constitutional diseases. If tendencies to cancer and some forms of insanity and mental weakness are inheritable and transmissible, celibacy may become an imperative obligation. The question is one that in these days must be frankly faced by Social Ethics. The study of *individual* inheritance, with its many instances of regression, may (despite Galton's *Hereditary Genius*) lead many to pessimism. But the admitted facts regarding *Social* inheritance incline one to adopt more optimistic views. For if from clever parents

there is generally regression or deviation, on the other hand the race is a wide fraternity, and the descendants of the under-average tend to approximate to the average level. A wise system of physical and mental education will do much to counteract the hurtful influences of early nutrition and environment and to increase those which are auxiliary to the mental and moral health of the nation.

From the ascertained facts of Heredity, it is clear that there is no destruction of freedom or responsibility. If acquired characteristics are not transmitted, clearly human volition does not come within the sphere of heredity. Some evolutionists deny that a man's character is his own, and affirm that his whole life-career is predetermined by the bundle of tendencies which make up the individual. But this view omits the main facts of the case. Heredity has *much* to do with the formation of character, but no one has ever proved that it has *everything* to do with it. It is but one of many factors that go to the upbuilding of character; and of these, environment and the free choice of the moral agent are two of the most important. Heredity will often determine *where* a man's weakest point is to be found in his conflict with temptation, but it never can determine *what* the result of that conflict will be. No man is helplessly handed over by his birth to the forces of

alcoholism or immorality. He is free to resist and to claim the helpful and counteracting grace of God, which can make him strong at his weakest point. Our evil heritage may be met and mastered by the new heredity of grace. If that which is born of the flesh is flesh, yet it is not less true that that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The whole character is reinforced by grace. "We are strengthened with all might by the Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. iii. 16).

CHARACTER AS AFFECTED BY SIN

That through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful.—St. Paul.

This is death, and the sole death,
When man's loss comes to him from his gain,
Darkness from light, from knowledge ignorance,
And lack of love from love made manifest.
—R. Browning.

A wretched thing it were to have our heart
Like a thronged highway or a busy street,
Where every idle thought has leave to meet,
Pause, or pass on, as in an open mart;
Or like some roadside pool, which no nice art
Has guarded that the cattle may not beat
And foul it with a multitude of feet,
Till of the heavens it can give back no part.
—Archbishop Trench.

O Lord, if still obdurate I
Seize Thou, before that spirit die,
A piercing pain, a killing sin,
And to my dead heart run it in.
—R. L. Stevenson.

CHAPTER IV

Character as affected by Sin

We have seen what character is, and how it is affected by sex, temperament, heredity, and environment. Yet with all these differences, personality remains the same. Each one is responsible for his actions and his character.

Nevertheless, in this life of limitations and of evil, character is not seen in its perfect form. An alien principle has intruded into man's nature, and thrown him out of harmony with the true end of his life. His conscience is darkened, his moral aims distorted, and his virtuous energy broken. Character, separated from God by sin, is cut off from its chief source of strength, and is apt to form itself after false standards. Therefore, before discussing the highest type of character, we must look at the fact of evil in the world, and its effect upon men's habits and disposition.

Sin is unknown to non-religious ethics, which can borrow the word only from Christian morality.

It is the ghost that haunts modern literature and philosophy. Literature confesses its mysterious presence, and fills many of its pages with laying bare the ulcerous sores of the sensual life. Philosophy frequently treats it as a mere defect involved in the finite nature of man, or as only a break-down of human nature on its way to the goal of perfect goodness. But such a representation comes short of the truth. For sin is self-will, breaking away from the law of goodness, and determining itself in contradiction to the law of God. It is more than a mistake or miscalculation as to the Highest Good. It is essentially opposition to God, and deserves, not excuses, but moral reprobation.

Modern science has joined with philosophy in magnifying heredity and in minimising the share which the individual has in his own degradation, until the latter becomes the mere product of inherited tendencies. He is like a projectile, shot forth from the past, whose moral course can be determined as easily as that of a parabola or an ellipse. But moral evil begins in self-will, and it cannot be calculated by conic sections. The Biblical story of the introduction of sin is full of sound psychological truth. The first sin began in unbelief. It grew to pride. It ended in lust.

And in all these forms it was self that was the agent.

Jesus, in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, gives us the true analysis of sin. He shows us there that the young man was the possessor of a will-power of his own, and was master of his destiny. He teaches that sin, so far from being the victory of freedom, was really its abuse, and that this abuse of liberty brought, not liberty, but slavery. The Prodigal's sin began in the selfish claim to have his share in his father's goods and to enjoy his patrimony before the time. He ceased to find in his father's will the centre of his life, and transferred that centre to himself. He made pleasure the end of his existence, and thus swiftly and surely went down the inclined plane to wretchedness and slavery. That is Christ's analysis of sin.

It is also an illustration of the way in which sin has injured character. It darkens the mind and blinds it to man's highest good. It turns the affections away to things that are mean, selfish, and sensual. It weakens the will and renders it powerless to obey the dictates of conscience. It destroys the even balance of character, and gives predominance to evil principles.[1] The will that

[1] Cf. Beyschlag, *Neutest. Theologie*, i. 90; Stevens' *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 339 ff.

ought to respond to the rule of reason fails to do so. The function of will is to regulate man's impulsive tendencies to action, and to keep them under the government of reason. But when the latter is dethroned by sin, the will-power is broken. The drunkard's defect is the absence of self-control. He is the slave of a physical craving of an artificial appetite, itself the creation of an evil habit. The sad tragedy of the drunkard's life consists in the abdication of the government of the will, and in the grovelling slavery to mere impulse of one who should be its master.

But in the true self, intellect, feeling, and will must act in harmony. And if, in the focal point of his being, a man is unhinged by evil, then he is dethroned indeed, and becomes the victim of unreason and sensualism.[1] In such circumstances his personality can develop only into a character incomplete and weak; and the character will work itself out into conduct marred by folly and broken with inconsistencies.

One of the saddest results of evil is found in the ethical truth that every act of unfaithfulness tends

[1] To St. Paul as to Jesus the sense of a divided will is essentially the sense of sin (Rom. vii.). Contrast with this W. James' singular view as to the "twice-born," *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 488.

to produce a course of such conduct. The good which is refused exercises a weaker influence over the spirit. The evil which is chosen begins to hold the man with a stronger grip. Thread by thread the tendency weaves itself into a disposition. Very soon the disposition grows into a habit, a besetting sin that clings to the soul like the poisoned garment of Nessus. Slowly but surely it forges the links of the iron chain by which men are bound to the *corpus vile* of evil lusts. The law of Habit, which was intended by the Creator to work for good and to result in fixed lines of righteous character, is changed to evil. Mind, will, and desires are handed over to it; and it becomes a second nature, warping them in favour of what is sensual and vile.

This tendency of wrong-doing to fixity of character is set forth in many graphic pictures by our great poets and novelists. Perhaps it never received a grander delineation than it got at the hands of Goethe. Who that has read the story of Mephistopheles and Dr. Faust has not been struck with the terrible power that the malignant genius exercised over his pupil? The exhibition, in minute detail in the legend, of the successive steps by which even a learned man may deliberately barter away his birthright for a mess of the vile pottage

of vice, has taken possession of the mind of Germany.

This is the meaning of the saying that a man's history is his character. This law of continuity is intended by God to be truly beneficent, so that goodness shall become a second nature, and the man shall desire only his highest good. But the Word of God seems also to hint at the possibility under this law of the final identification of the will with evil. Milton, in his picture of Satan, describes him as saying—

"Evil, be thou my good."

And in the Epistle to the Hebrews the idea of finality is also expressed. Esau is said to have found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. In such an instance the man has become the "slave of sin," and is imprisoned in its iron fetters. The course of vice has become a habit of vice; and the poor victim is little better than simply an agent to procure such pleasure as his senses demand for their gratification. There is not the total absence of will-power; but the will's activity is limited by a fixity of character producing a decided choice of evil and refusal of good. It is probably an illustration of "the unpardonable sin"; because while the man will seek pardon even

with tears, yet he will not accept a pardon that necessitates separation from his sin. He has in reality chosen evil as his good. He has sold his soul to Mephistopheles.

Such is the effect of a course of evil action on character. But we have shown that this need not be, and that the law of habit has a beneficent side in the Divine intention. Yet before we turn to the consideration of character as renewed in Christ, we have to point out some effects that are not removed by Divine forgiveness. It is true that God is plenteous in mercy and ready to forgive all that confess their sins. He will cancel the *eternal* penalty attaching to transgression; but in doing so He may not remove many severe *temporal* consequences.

Sin is not merely a violation of the law of God. It is also a violence done to one's own moral and physical nature; and in many cases it is a violation of the civil law. So far as it is a crime and a breach of the law of the land, the penalty may be remitted by the head of the government. But in so far as it is a breach of ethical law, there is no remission of penalty, for ethics cannot forgive. He who deliberately commits a theft has inflicted upon his conscience an eternal injury. A long course of debauchery will inevitably impair a man's judgment, shatter his nerves, and weaken his will. The demerit

of adultery can never be transferred from the man that ruins another's happiness. The blameworthiness rests upon the transgressor for ever. Even Omnipotence cannot make what once has been not to have been. In the very nature of things every transgression against the law of conscience passes a burning iron over the sensitive surface, and sears it. Every sin against the light "brings inflamed blood upon the spiritual retina."

A young lad at school is furtively drawn aside by a senior companion and shown a vile photograph. Only for one minute does he glance at it, and then turns away. But an irretrievable injury has been done to him, and a dark stain has been left upon his pure imagination. That companion can never altogether undo the injury.

The penalties attached to sin as vice are not removed by God. Even though He forgives, forgiveness is not the same thing as impunity. It is not like erasing a blot on soiled paper, and leaving a clean page. The foul deed has been done, and though the punishment does not come in the shape of actual pain, yet the sure retribution arrives in deterioration of character.

The sad story of King David furnishes an instance in point. The intensely penitential fifty-first psalm tells us of his experience of the Divine forgiveness.

Yet as far as concerns the results of that vice, of which the act was but a single manifestation, the bitter consequences remained behind. David's family was disrupted by the deed. The fine gold of his character was dimmed. He was never the same man again.

It is well for us to learn that the great ethical laws which govern character cannot be broken with impunity. The moment we violate them, the avenger is upon our path. These laws are not arbitrary, but normal to the moral order of the world; and the breach of them brings an inevitable penalty. We may even say there is no staying of the penalty, although it may not make itself manifest for many years. These laws work themselves out through the constitution of the man who breaks them, and by the certain laws of inherited tendencies.

How often do parents discover that the true cause of the evil habits of their children lies far away back in some faults of their own youth! They cannot rule well their own household, because they never learned to obey their own parents. Their youthful temper and self-will sowed seeds that have come to fruit in old age. There is nothing arbitrary or artificial in this. It is plainly a principle and method in the order of the universe. "Evil birds always come home to roost."

Let us be sure, however, that these great moral laws are intended for our good. The discipline has in it a merciful purpose. There are some sins that can be burned out of us only by the red-hot irons of offended law. It is better that we should suffer than that the cancerous disease should be allowed to fester and feed on our vitals. Many a man learns the heinousness of the sins of his youth only when he sees them reflected in his own child. His sorrow is his best teacher, and becomes remedial. If the pain is penal, it is also purgatorial.

This all brings us back to the truth that character has been hindered by actual transgression, and by inherited tendencies. And if we are to have the evil removed, and the defects remedied, and our character built up in strength and purity, we must turn in trust and hope to Him in whom is stored the whole virtuous energy of our race, the Restorer and the model of Christian character.

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER: ITS GENESIS

Then thro' the mid complaint of my confession,
Then thro' the pang and passion of my prayer,
Leaps with a start the shock of His possession,
Thrills me and touches, and the Lord is there.

Whoso has felt the spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound or doubt Him or deny,
Yea with one voice, O world tho' thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.

—FREDERICK MYERS.

The noblest workers of our world bequeath us nothing so great as themselves. The best end of all a man's work is to show us what he is.—MARTINEAU.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His Commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.—ECCLESIASTES.

Self-realisation means more than the mere assertion of the self as a whole. . . . "Realise yourself" does not mean merely "Be a whole," but "Be an infinite whole."—F. H. BRADLEY.

There is a courtesy of the heart, allied to love. From it springs the purest courtesy in the outward behaviour.—GOETHE.

CHAPTER V

Christian Character: its Genesis

We have hitherto been looking at human character and considering its elements and the influences that affect it. We have tried to understand our complex selves by looking at our nature in its unity and entirety, penetrating beneath the dualism of reason and sensibility to the underlying unity of Will, where the total ethical self is found. And we have seen how evil has introduced a bias into the judgment and a weakness into the will, and subjected the godlike reason to the dominion of passions and appetites. But when reason is subordinate and sensibility supreme, there cannot be that right conduct which is the outcome of true character.

Therefore we turn for help from ethics to religion, and ask what aid Christian ethics can give us. Here we learn that piety and morality are intimately connected. A true morality cannot ignore man's relation to God. It covers all the round sphere of life and conduct, and in the life of man it leaves

not a single moment of time or region of thought morally indifferent. Any idea of departments of feeling or of devotion existing independent of ethics is an anti-moral idea. Besides, the will of the Creator is a law that continually binds us; so that duty cannot be even conceived, far less done, apart from religion. Man is not absolutely self-sufficient. He does not possess existence and rights independently of his Maker. He is, from the beginning of his life to the end of it, dependent on God for life and breath and all things.

But since such a life will express itself in feelings of love to God, in trust and willing obedience to His commands, it is moral as well as religious. A religious life must be a moral life, since conduct is but the exponent of inward character, and morality is the sure outcome of religion. And, on the other hand, the value of morality will always be in proportion to its recognition of the help rendered to it by Divine grace, and to its perception of man's highest good as lying in God.

It has been to the great detriment of morals and to the infinite loss of religion that their mutual interdependence has not been fully recognised. Many of the recent scientific theories of morals maintain an entire independence of religion. They demand that we shall be 'positive' in our thought.

With the one hand they banish the doctrine of man's freedom, and with the other they oust all reference to God. The world of phenomena alone is real; all else is unreal, or at least unintelligible. "Let us abide contentedly within the home of positive experience; why wander outside into the unknown and unknowable? The only safe road is the well-worn path of ethical and practical realities." And if we earnestly ask for a "Moral Dynamic," for some power of goodness that will help to make the otherwise hard life of morality a possibility and a joy to us, we are assured that we shall find a sufficient inspiration in the enthusiasm of humanity. Here is stimulus strong enough to carry us through all life's trials, and motive-power deep enough to touch the fontal springs of action. Ethics has no need of religion. They are mutually exclusive and independent. Man is the measure of all things, and possesses in his own nature a sufficient moral motive-power. He can save himself even unto the uttermost.

From another side we have the statement that so far from being mutually exclusive, they are one and the same. The Illuminists of Germany merged all religion in morality. "Wahr ist was klar ist" was their cry. Dualism between the two must be abolished. They need no reconciliation; they claim

no interdependence, because between them there is identity. Conduct is "more than three-fourths of life"; it is the whole of it. If man's mind were sufficiently trained in truth he would see that duty is the only real religion, that virtue is his *summum bonum*. What men of deficient education call piety is only moralised emotion. The "nature of things is rational: live thou according to reason, and let thy right living be thy religion."

Very singularly, as showing how extremes meet, the men farthest removed in point of feeling from the Illuminists in Germany, namely, the religious Mystics, affirmed this same identity. Only they reversed the process. Instead of affirming that religion is synonymous with morality, they maintained that morality is one with religion. The moral man is the believer: the only true character is the Christian character. Religion embraces the life of intellect, emotion, and will, as well as that which in a narrower sense is called the practical life. Man is not an agent: he is but an instrument in the hands of God, and his duty is not to act but to be acted on as God may choose. He does nothing: God does everything. And the more we can merge our being in His, the better men and women shall we be. Man's chief end is to renounce the practical activities of life altogether, and to lose

himself in God, who is to be the ocean to the river of his thoughts and purposes.

But good Master Tauler did not see that to regard our personality as losing itself in God in the same way as the rivers do in the sea or the vapour in the atmosphere, is to destroy the reality of the moral life. Responsibility does not attach to a river or a vapour. It is the predicate of an agent. The reconciliation of a free human personality may be a problem beyond our grasp, but we dare not give up either side of it for a religious Mysticism or a scientific Naturalism. The Mystic tries to reach God through the negation of self. God must rather be reached by the renewing and enriching of self. The Bible that presents a worthy view of God presents also a worthy view of man as the son of God. It does not speak of him as a non-moral instrument, a mere tool in the sculptor's hand; but it invites him by the offer of grace and pardon to realise his adoption, and become a fellow-worker with God in carrying out the Divine plan of his life.

Therefore religion and morality are twin sisters. They go hand in hand in God's service and in man's practical life. "Fear God and keep His commandments" covers the whole sphere of man's duty. Morality will thrive only when *rooted in*

religion.[1] A one-sided moral life will be sure to end in an idolatry of the creature, which after all is a religion, only a false one. And a one-sided religious life, that interprets the ethical life as mere semblance and unreality, very soon depersonalises man. And to depersonalise is to demoralise him, since it results in the pantheistic resolution of man into God, and explains his freedom only by explaining it away. The reality of both morality and religion is necessarily bound up with the reality of man's responsibility, and with the moral integrity of his personal character. Man's free moral self, rooted in religion, leaning on God, living in love and communion with God,—this is the key that opens all the locks, and is the only sufficient interpretation of our moral and religious life. In other words, the integrity of our moral and spiritual being can be found only in a Christian character.

Further, this truth must be emphasised — that everywhere and always it will be a man's duty to be both moral and religious. The religion that does not find its issue in moral practice is devoid of reality and depth. And, on the other hand, there is not a single moment of life or any region

[1] Cf. Caird's *Philosophy of Religion*, chap. iv.; Mackintosh's *From Comte to Benjamin Kidd*; and Dr. Flint's *Theism*, especially Notes in Appendix.

of character which can be spoken of as morally indifferent.

There are some who would exclude amusements and trifles from the sphere of morality, inasmuch as these things belong rather to the region of rights than of duties. *Where* they should spend a holiday, and whether in the course of the day they should travel, or rest, or read, or fish, or enjoy music seems to them not to be a matter of moral moment. Against such a view we are bound to maintain that character covers the whole of life; and that whenever a man escapes from the sway of moral law, he becomes for the time utterly characterless. At no time and in no place can our actions be morally or religiously indifferent.

We very much fear that the desire to consider amusements and holidays as being outside the sphere of morality springs from a misconception of the moral life. It is supposed by some to be a life laden with imperatives, "cribbed, cabined, and confined," and so full of disagreeable duties that the pleasure of a holiday consists chiefly in escaping from it. But it is a fatal fallacy to suppose that a moral life is one in which duty is felt to be a painful burden. This is not less an error than the paradox of virtue maintained by Kant, that when a virtuous man has conquered his vices and

so naturalised all the virtues in himself that goodness becomes a delight, then it ceases to be goodness.[1] Which is to say, that when a man becomes perfectly virtuous he ceases to be virtuous. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the too common view that there are spaces and hours of life which are covered neither by morality nor religion.[2]

We have seen how personality develops into character, and how the moral ideal is an ideal of character. But as the moral sense matures, the difference between a man's character as it is and as it ought to be presents itself to his conscience as a dualism that must be got rid of. Conscience demands, not only that this or that duty must be done, but that the doer must be a good man. Being comes before doing, and alone gives it value. At the centre of his personality the doer must be really good. The *task of a true Christian ethic is the discovery of this central renewing principle of the moral and spiritual life.* For the Christian man that life-principle can be found nowhere but in the Person of the Revealer and Creator of Christian character, Jesus Christ.

In the Incarnate Son of God there is found a power

[1] It is strange that the Utilitarian Godwin, in his *Political Justice*, approaches on this point very closely to Kant.

[2] See Bradley's *Ethical Studies*. Note to Essay V.

to remove the terrible dualism between nature and morality and to reconcile them. In Him dwells the fulness of Divine grace, by which the faded image of God may be restored, and we may reach the stature of perfect manhood. As God and as man, related to both, Christ is the productive archetype of character. A new relationship between God and man is realised in Him. "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree," and made forgiveness a possibility. He invites us to a fellowship of love that shall enable us to live on His own lofty moral level. In Him we find both the rule of life and the power of conforming to the Divine law. From His throne in the heavens He continues by His Spirit to exercise an active and sanctifying influence on all believers.

In the Person of Jesus Christ, therefore, we find the revelation of the true character, as well as the power to maintain it in perfection. That character was not only portrayed in word but lived in deed. It was lived before it was described. That was "the Life that is life indeed." We must trace back Christian character to its genesis and spring in Jesus Christ. In the life of the Master, as depicted in the Gospels, we have the Model of manhood and the Ideal of Christian character.

Man at his moral best is found only once in

history. There he is presented full of grace and truth, Son of God and Son of Man, the incarnate ideal of moral manhood. As such He is the Head of our humanity, the goal of its aspirations, a Personality of universal moral worth for all men. All that is narrow or merely national falls away from Him. Elements too are added that were not found in the Davids and Daniels, in the Abrahams and Samuels of the preceding dispensation. He is the one Catholic Man, the type of perfect character.

This has been denied, and the denial has not a few names in literature attached to it. Yet where are the men, great in thought or in action, who have been altogether free from their environment? Plato, the noble-minded, the man of wide and lofty horizons, is essentially a Greek. Cicero, Virgil, the Cæsars, are Romans of the Romans. None of them escaped the ideals of his day, or far transcended the limits of national character. Yet, though Jesus was born into the most exclusive nation of the world (the bigotry of the Jews is spoken of by every writer of antiquity), strange to say, out of the heart of this narrow particularism springs the Son of Man, Who exhibits no trace of provincial exclusiveness, Who is the one Catholic Spirit whose teaching is found to be suitable to every age and condition of mankind.

It is a simple historical fact that Jesus Christ has proved Himself powerful enough to touch the heart of the degraded Maori, of the Indian Pariah, the educated Brahmin, the African savage, and the cultured European; to win alike the men of the first century, of the fifteenth, and of the nineteenth. "It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love, and has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions; and has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the highest incentive to its practice."

Jesus has bestowed not on one generation, but on the whole world, the gift of a new ideal, the creation of a new character. In Him all men's longings find satisfaction, and all men's hearts find rest. We do not wonder that even John Stuart Mill, far away though he had wandered from the Christian faith, could say with deep sincerity, that no modern unbeliever could do better than shape his life so as to meet with the approval of the Christ of the Gospels. Unfortunately the Church has sometimes gone for her ideals to the Old Testament rather than to the New Testament. Periods of history have been characterised by the Church's adoption of the heroic ideal of the Hebrew Age, and by her members

framing their character in consistency therewith. The iron and blood of the Cromwellian epoch came from the Books of Judges and Samuel more than from the Gospels. The persecutions and convulsions of the time had led men to steep their minds in the warlike ideals of the early Hebrews. The result was the heroic spirit of Puritanism, manifesting itself in a character whose prominent features were rather legal than evangelical, and partook more of John the Baptist than of Jesus. It gave us the type of the Pilgrim Fathers sketched by Longfellow in his Miles Standish. It determined the ascendency for a time of the Hebrew above the Christian Ideal.

But such an ideal could not last beyond the convulsions of that age. We have to see that for all time the perfect type lies not in the Old, but in the New Testament; and that Hebrew history runs its race looking to Him as its Author and Finisher, in whom all its seeking is to be satisfied, and Who at the same time is to be a new beginning, a personality[1] powerful and creative in the moral realm.

[1] Jodl, *Geschichte d. Ethik*, Bd. i. § 50.

JESUS CHRIST THE RENEWER OF CHARACTER

Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding Lamb!
Thou Maker of new morals to mankind,
The grand morality is love of THEE.

—YOUNG.

Take all in a word; the truth in God's breast
Lies trace for trace upon ours impressed;
Though He is bright, and we so dim,
We are made in His image to witness Him.

—R. BROWNING.

I have undertaken to make a man of myself first of all. If I succeed, I may make something else afterwards. If I don't succeed, I shall not be fit for much otherwise.—PRESIDENT GARFIELD.

Yes, Thou forgivest; but with all forgiving
Canst not renew my innocence again:
Make Thou, O Christ, a dying of my living,
Purge from the sin, but never from the pain.

—FRED. MYERS.

Das Werk lobt den Meister.

—GERMAN PROVERB.

The errors cancelled, the dark shadows banished,
In the glad light of a new world begun.

GEORGE MATHESON.

CHAPTER VI

Jesus Christ the Renewer of Character

We have found the ideal of Christian character in Jesus Christ, and we can find nothing higher or more perfect. But the ideal is not to hang before us, like a picture on a wall, only to win our admiration. It is not enough to exalt Jesus, as many do, to the pedestal of the world's pre-eminent genius, the absolute Head of humanity. It will not do, with David Strauss, merely to place Him "in the chapel of Alexander Severus, where, with Orpheus and Homer, He has to stand beside, not only Moses, but also Mohammed, and must not be ashamed of the society of Alexander and Cæsar, of Raphael and Mozart." Few would deny to Jesus a place in the Pantheon of great men. But He asserts for Himself claims that are inconsistent with such a place. He is the Sinless One "in whose mouth was no guile." He is the faultless pattern of morality, and in Himself includes all possible perfection. He is the Perfect Example, in order that His disciples may copy His

features and live His life, and be holy as He Himself is holy.

Yet all who have earnestly sought to follow Christ have been the first to confess how far behind Him they stand. They feel that they need not only a pattern to imitate, but also a *power to redeem them.* The more perfect the example, the more hopeless seems the effort, unless the Perfect One has also the ability to renew the disciple's nature, and break the bondage of his evil habits.

Apart from such power, the spectacle of a perfectly Sinless Being would by itself be but a continual judgment on us. The picture of a flawless type would be our severest condemnation. It would stand over against us as far removed in its dazzling purity as the pinnacles of Chimborazo are from the dwellers in the plains below.

The weakness of all commandment is that while it utters its imperative "thou shalt," it gives no help to fulfil it. But the gospel brings us more than a mere injunction. It reveals a Redeemer no less than an Example. In Christ it presents an ethical force, a "virtue-making power" equal to the individual need. And so we are drawn to the Son of Man with the attraction of a love kindled by His beauty, and a faith that apprehends His grace, and knows

Him to be both the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Christ is therefore more than a pattern for conduct. He is the Incarnate Love of God who came in the Divine purpose to reconcile men to the Father. In Him God's law has been satisfied. And this has been done in such an ethical way that man's sin has been judged and condemned, and his guilt has been cancelled. Christ took to His own royal soul the stain of sin, and in His death bore the Divine judgment on it. Thus we are saved from condemnation in a way that affirms the justice of God, and yet does not in any degree either condone or diminish the gravity of the human offence.

In the Person of Christ, flesh of our flesh, God's justice and God's love have been satisfied, and the ethical value of that merit now belongs to man. It is ours to apprehend by faith that atoning virtue, and to realise Christ's work as done *for us*. And it is further ours to discover that this merit is not a mere objective possession, but is ethically active to change our life, and to produce *in us* the fruits of virtuous conduct and of righteous living.

How is this work of renewal effected? It is brought about by the agency of the Holy Spirit, and by the instrumentality of divine truth. In the light of the Perfect Example we see how far away from

perfection our own life is. As the Holy Spirit "convinces of sin," He leads us through ordeals of shame and self-accusation. He restores to the blunted conscience vitality, quickening, and the sense of moral perception, and He creates an honest and open mind. We see ourselves over against a new ethical background, and all our flattering estimate of our goodness gives place to an intense sense of sinfulness, out of which genuine repentance springs.

But along with this conviction of sin He leads us to apprehend the gospel of forgiveness presented in Jesus Christ. His work is creative, and we cannot penetrate its many secrets. But we may say that our growth Godward proceeds along two lines, the deepening sense of our sinfulness, and the growing assurance that all needed grace is in Jesus Christ. And so we come to perceive that it is our duty to make use of His promised help for all our necessities, and to yield ourselves to Him to be moulded as He wills.

When this has been done we have passed through the crisis of conversion. We have reached the starting-point from which all the after-life and character are evolved. There are planted in us the seeds of those virtues and graces that can be neither filtered into the nature by external means, nor engrafted by educational systems. The evil principle of egoism is

contradicted. The man is clothed with a new power to break through sinful habits, and to beat down aberrant tendencies. He who before was determined by self is now determined by Jesus Christ. Divine forces have begun to operate in him that shall yet result in the upbuilding of Christian character.

We leave it to the theologian to array and interpret the proof-texts in which this scriptural doctrine is set forth. But all religious experience has its ethical side, and not least that which so intimately concerns the genesis of the Christian life and the roots of Christian character. The experience may take many forms, and in no two individuals will it manifest exactly the same features. In Christian families, where children are brought up in an atmosphere of warm piety, there may be little consciousness of such a change. As Fuller has wisely said: "Who are those which commonly have such gentle usage in their conversion? Generally such as never were notoriously profane, and have had the benefit of godly education from pious parents. In some corporations the sons of freemen, bred under their fathers in their profession, may set up and exercise their father's trade without ever being bound apprentices thereunto. Such children whose parents have been citizens of New Jerusalem, and have been bred in the mystery of godliness, oftentimes are entered

into religion without any spirit of bondage seizing upon them,—a great benefit and rare blessing where God in His goodness is pleased to bestow it."[1]

To some the dawning of this new day may come as the light comes in our temperate zone, where the morning slowly creeps across the horizon, and first only the mountain-tops are touched with gold. Then, as the sun rises in the heavens, his bright rays penetrate the valleys; the mists begin to wreathe and roll and ascend, till at length the whole land is bathed in light.

To others it comes like the sun in the tropics. A few minutes before sunrise it is total darkness; suddenly the sky is shot through with arrows of fire; and in another moment the fiery disc of the king of day shoots above the horizon. Night has fled, and day has come. So came the advent of the new day of Christ to men like St. Paul or St. Augustine. Many a Christian biography testifies to the same sudden and deep experience. The whole depths of the man's nature have been stirred. He leaps, as it were, from the grave up to the stars. Old things have passed away; all things have become new. It is the most outstanding moral crisis through which he has ever passed. In every fibre of his moral and

[1] Fuller, *The Cause and Cure of a Wounded Conscience*, Dialogue II.

spiritual nature he is intensely aware of the change. And to those who know him it is apparent that he has changed his whole moral atmosphere, and has entered upon a life of new moral relations, the life of the restored prodigal, of the forgiven child, a life of new obedience and loving service.

Whatever be the manner of the change, it *is* a change. The call of God's Spirit has been listened to, and the Christian man has entered upon a holy vocation. Invisible tides of mystic sweetness and spiritual strength begin to flow through him. The Spirit of holiness takes possession of him, neutralising the vices that lie in his lower nature. Prayer, which he felt to be a burden, an effort, perhaps a penance, is now a joy, a glad spontaneity, a prayer-life pulsating with the sense of ethical power and victory. He is lifted up into a new and higher universe of desire. The old irrational self is denied, and he begins to identify himself with his better and rational self. Life takes on a new colour, gets a new meaning. While the sense of sin deepens, the assurance grows that with the help of God's grace he will gain the victory over his sins, and reach that type of moral excellence which has been presented to him in the ideal character of the Son of Man.

But it must be clearly understood that this renewal does not involve any change in the substance of our

spiritual being. No new faculty is given. Sin is a malady, but not an attribute or element of man; and if he needs a renewal, he does not require a transubstantiation. The new disposition which is given is not inserted as a watchmaker inserts the springs and wheels into a watch. No new mental or moral endowment is bestowed, and no faculty is destroyed. If I have a genius for mathematics or business before conversion, I shall have it after. If my tastes are artistic, the grace of God will not remove, but only sanctify them.

This truth is humbling to human reason. A work so clearly the result of supernatural grace has been a stumbling-block to many. If only a method could be found by which the mind might reach the cure of sin, by the simple apprehension of truth, Rationalism would soon adjust its differences with Religion. But this claim entirely ignores the fact that man needs more than the satisfaction of his mind with reasoned truth. He needs the conversion of his heart to God, and the renewing of his will in righteousness. There is more implied in conversion than the acceptance of a new system of sound ethics. We have all more knowledge than we have will to use it, and we have more will to resolve than we have power to carry out the resolution. "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." Moral

teachers since Aristotle's time have all confessed their failure here, and have looked with longing for some dynamic of duty. That power is found only in Christ, whose Spirit is given to all that seek Him.

In Goethe's treatment of the Faust legend, along with much that is beautiful and excellent, there is a painful absence of the recognition of this principle. Faust falls into the lowest depth of moral degradation; but as he sinks we discover that he feels a deeper dissatisfaction than ever with his sensual life, and we hope that he may rise through bitter experience to the higher platform of Christian faith. Goethe is content to represent the choice before him as one between the life of libertinism and intellectual pleasure. But the gospel according to Goethe is powerless to cool the hot blood of lust, and to drive out the demons with which sin has peopled the heart. Culture is not conversion. The spring of the spiritual dynamic is not found in the region of art. Poetry and science may do much; but they will not bring spiritual life out of moral death. Only the Spirit of God can bring to us that which is a power for the needs of every day, as well as for all the loftier ranges of spiritual experience.

The great lack in the ethical teaching of our time is the absence from it of any recognition of the fact of sin. It speaks of man as if, on the whole, he were

naturally inclined to goodness and prone to altruism. The result is, that its precepts are ludicrously inappropriate to the facts of human nature; they go entirely over the heads of the multitude. It is cruel to bid me rise and walk if the coils of the serpent are round my limbs and I am powerless to untwine them. Before we can make any solid progress in goodness, we must get our evil tastes and tendencies reversed. When we have got help from One who can change the current of our desires and master our habits and set our face Godwards, then we may speak of progress and development. When we have been "renewed in the spirit of our mind," then will begin the growth of our Christian character.

PROGRESS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure:
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.

—Sir Galahad.

Fame is a vapour: popularity an accident: riches take wings: only one thing endures—character.—Horace Greeley.

'Tis not thy work the Master needs, but thee,
The obedient spirit, the believing heart.

What the superior man seeks is in himself: what the small man seeks is in others.—Confucius.

Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll,
Around us each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.

—Tennyson.

After all, the kind of world one carries about in one's self is the important thing: the world outside takes all its grace and virtue from that.—J. Russell Lowell.

Wealth is of the heart, not of the hand.—John Milton.

More careful not to serve Thee much,
But to please Thee perfectly.

—Anna L. Waring.

CHAPTER VII

Progress in the Christian Life

I

The Christian man may be regarded from two sides. His personality has spiritual worth; it also possesses ethical value. If we can speak of him as saved, we must likewise be able to speak of him as sanctified. He has been redeemed from sin's penalty for the purpose of being liberated from sin's power. Viewed from the Divine side, he is a child of God, an heir of heaven; viewed from the human side, he is a new ethical force in society, an additional makeweight for righteousness in the community and nation. The preacher speaks of him as one who has been enriched with the gift of eternal life; the moralist thinks of him as one in whom the roots of Christian character have begun to strike themselves.

The Divine forgiveness is not itself an end, although it is so regarded in much of the religious language of our day. It is but the means to an end.

We are reconciled unto God through Jesus Christ in order that we may live, not in independent freedom apart from God, but with Him as His adopted children. We have been redeemed for the very purpose of being separated from sin, and made holy as God Himself is holy. "Being set free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and as its end everlasting life." Justification is therefore only a means to the great end of Christian character, which itself is the beginning of life eternal.

This is a subject to which too little thought is given. Many seem to be content to know that they stand within the Kingdom, without going on to seek fitness for the King's service. Their anxiety is concentrated on their personal salvation not on their Christ-likeness. How many imagine that, when they have trusted in Christ, and peace has in some measure filled their heart, everything has been accomplished! They have been possessed by a joy unspeakable; and they think of nothing else than that a heaven of eternal happiness lies before them.

The sure result of this misconception is that very soon they come to a standstill in their efforts to realise the Christian ideal. They enter the school of Christ, but all their days they remain in the lowest

section of it. Beyond the rudiments of religious life they make scarcely any advance. In New Testament language they are fitly described as babes feeding on milk, when they should be full-grown men feeding on strong meat. Many do not even remain stationary, but disgrace the name of their Lord by falling back into evil habits. "Thou hast lost thy first love" was not more true of the Church of Ephesus than it is of many a Church to-day. Where there should be progress unto perfection and "pressing on towards the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God," there is only retrogression into formality, lassitude, and worldliness.

But when we have entered on the Christian life our education is not completed, neither have we been made perfect. We are only candidates for perfection. We "have not yet attained," but we are bound to reach the highest possible attainment. Many faults remain, many besetting sins cling to us; our character is marred by much one-sidedness. Yet for all those shortcomings provision has been made in Christ. In Him there is strength for our weakness, courage for our cowardice, hope for our despondency, calm for our irritableness, and peace, deep and abiding peace, for all our unrest. Were Christians but to draw continually upon that

store of grace, they would not fail to finally reach the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

One might reasonably question whether those who seem to be making no progress in overcoming besetting sins are possessed of a true faith in Jesus Christ. But the subject belongs properly to theology, and we therefore shall not discuss it. We only urge that deliverance from the penalty should be followed by a growing deliverance from the power of sin. For betwixt these the causal nexus is complete. In spiritual birth the moral nature is aroused to new energy, and springs forward to a willing service. A new love is instilled into all duty; and the fresh principle of life seeks to realise itself in increased meetness for the Master's use.

Of this at least we are certain, that the only security for the maintenance of our Christian life is to be found in the continuance of our growth in grace. The tree that ceases to grow ceases to live. The man who thinks that his Christian character can maintain its force and vigour while it remains stationary, is ignorant alike of it and of its needs. To the last day of his life there remains with him the duty of moral culture and of spiritual progress. If there be any slackening in this work

his character will proportionately lose in strength and completeness.

The importance of this subject is so great that the author may be forgiven if he says that it has been the chief motive that induced him to write this volume. It is here that the present weakness of the Christian Church is found. It is in the discovery of the true cause of this weakness that the hope of her recovery lies. The subject might well occupy the attention of our Convocations and Congresses, of our Synods and General Assemblies, not less than it filled the minds of the apostles and guides of the early Christian Church. Well did they know that it was the force of Christian character, cultured and strengthened through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, that gave such inherent power to the Apostolic Church in its contest with the gross pollution of heathendom.

It is interesting to find that the two largest Epistles were written with the view of enforcing this duty of progress in realising Christ-likeness. The student of the Epistles to the Romans and to the Hebrews cannot fail to perceive how it constitutes the *raison-d'être* of these Scriptures. How shall I be conformed to the likeness of God's own Son? How shall I get spiritual health and manhood, and hold fast the beginning firm to the end?

It is to these questions that the Epistles give an answer.

No doubt the Epistle to the Romans contains a large amount of doctrine. But its *motif* is easily discovered. In the first five chapters St. Paul speaks of sin, of reconciliation, and of justification by faith, because these are the foundations on which the superstructure must be laid. But very soon he brings acceptance and reconciliation through Christ into contact with the grand co-ordinate truth,—the continuous life of the risen Redeemer. Have we died with Christ? Then we shall also live with Him. "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." "Present yourselves unto God as alive from the dead" (Rom. vi. 8, 13). The reconciliation must never be isolated from the Reconciler; the doctrine must never be dissociated from the ethics. The bondage house of the seventh chapter of Romans is not the place that a healthy, whole-hearted Christian should be living in. If he become careless and unwatchful, the latent old self will soon reassert its power, and bring him back to that prison-chamber to groan in his shame. But if he make a right use of his inestimable privilege, and learn to walk in the Spirit, he will step out into a life of freedom and of gladness. Consecration will

bring separation and liberty. Presenting to God the living sacrifice of his surrendered being, he will be a transformed man, and will prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. A life which is stationary, much more a life which is retrograde, is condemned by the whole drift of the teaching of this Epistle.

The same purpose dominates the mind of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Why were they not going on unto perfection? Why be only pupils in the school in which they should be teachers? Why cling to Old Testament rubrics and ritual when the heavenly sanctuary was open to them, and the ever-living High Priest was waiting to endow them for earthly work with the power of the heavenly life? The God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep, was prepared to make them perfect, to equip them in every good work to do His will. Wherefore, they should lay aside every sin that, like a garment, easily entangles their feet, and run for the goal, looking to Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of their faith. The closing chapter is full of counsel as to character and conduct. It is by means of this renewed personality, decentralised and Christ-possessed, living in continual communion with the ascended

Lord, that they will be enabled to stop the mouths of lions, and will be entitled to a place in the Roll of the Heroes of faith. The Epistle deserves the close study of all who would make definite progress in the Christian life.[1]

This deep desire for the ethical progress of the members of the Church which animated the early leaders should still animate every Christian heart. A man can have no nobler aim than the culture of his moral life. To be the best he can be, and to make the most that he can make of his talents for society and for the Kingdom of God, should be the highest object of all his efforts. It is only

[1] I have not referred to the writings of St. John. But in his Gospel and Epistles are found three favourite words which seem to compose the three stages of the *Scala Perfectionis* and at the same time rest on a sound psychological principle. These words are Light, Life, and Love. They represent a threefold division of the ascending path to perfection of character, so universally accepted in all ages and countries, that we cannot regard them as a merely conventional classification. These dominant ideas of St. John's writings are essential attributes of the Divine nature and necessary factors in all Christian progress. Compare Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, bk. vii. chap. x.; Sidgwick, *History of Ethics*, chap. iii. On the other hand, in the system of Aquinas and of the scholastic theologians, Love forms only the pinnacle of the pyramid of the cardinal virtues (wisdom, justice, valour, and prudence). But it is absurd to speak of these as involving an ascending gradation. The subject is well discussed in Luthardt's *Ethik Luthers*, p. 54; also under the three Greek words in Cremer's *Bibl. Theol., Wörterbuch*, 2nd ed.

by such means that he can attain the true end of his life and fulfil his destiny. It is only thus that he can get place and precedence in the coming heaven of God. "To sit on My right hand, and on My left hand, is not Mine to give, but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared" (Matt. xx. 23). The grades of heaven's hierarchy are determined by character not less than by service.

II

1. It has been urged that such a regard for one's self, such care and culture of our renewed being, is nothing else than selfishness under another name. This is a plausible objection, which one often meets with, and which has led to so much misapprehension that it must be carefully examined before we proceed further.

The question is really one of motive. Is it selfishness to make one's life of the highest possible use to our fellow-men? Is it selfish to make a life-long effort to root out every weed of selfishness from our heart? Such moral culture of the renewed self seems to be inconsistent with the attainment of selfish ends. On the other hand, to make one's personality the most perfect agent that it can be made in the service of righteousness, is quite con-

sistent with unselfishness. It is, in fact, a high Christian duty. It is but the recognition and affirmation of a man's own moral worth.

Every man has been made by God *a trustee of his own spiritual being, and of that trusteeship he dare not divest himself.* It is a sacred duty, unfaithfulness to which would be lack of loyalty to the supreme end of his life. Such an obligation amounts to a Divine command, and it is so treated by Christ when He sums up the Decalogue in the great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, . . . and thy neighbour as thyself." Here love for one's self is presupposed, and the commandment simply enjoins that the love of our neighbour shall not be less. If our Lord thus give His sanction to the love of self, making it the measure of our affection for our neighbour, *such love of self cannot be unethical.* On the contrary, to have little of it would be to the injury of our neighbour, since then the measure of our obligation to love others would be less. And if a man have nothing of this legitimate self-love, then he would be under no Christian obligation to love his neighbour at all.[1]

That Christ regarded self-love and duty as per-

[1] Cf. Dorner, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 445, 449; Smyth, *Christian Ethics*, part ii. cap. 2; S. Bryant, *Studies in Character*, p. 97.

fectly consistent with each other, is shown in the passage commonly called the Golden Rule—Matt. vi. 12: "All things, therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets." Bishop Butler, in his famous Sermon XII., on the love of our neighbour, quotes it in this connection, to show that the influence of this affection upon our general temper is to produce charitableness, to moderate party feeling, and either to prevent strife or heal such hurts as it may have caused. The love of our neighbour, according to this Golden Rule, is to be of the same kind and of the same amount as our love to ourselves.

Throughout the whole Bible, this love of self, in a sense totally removed from selfishness, is taken for granted. God's Word speaks of the worth of manhood as made in God's image. It was the absence of a true self-love that caused the first sin; it is its presence that will lead man to aim at the high possibilities of goodness within his reach. If God has so loved us as to give His only-begotten Son to die for us; if apostles, prophets, teachers, all ministries and sacraments, are ordained for our spiritual culture and glory,—shall we not regard ourselves as of worth? Shall we not measure our value at God's estimate? Is it not rather our

bounden right to have such an estimate of our individual worth as sons of God? Even Christ, who gave Himself for us a sacrifice, did not sacrifice His spiritual well-being for us. He became obedient unto death, and "therefore God highly exalted Him." His death can never be regarded as a desertion of His personality or a depreciation of His true self.

We need not say, on the other hand, that the love of self, dissociated from the love of God and of our neighbour, deserves all the hard things that have been said of it. The desire for Christian culture for its own sake, if such a desire can ever exist, is but the shadow cast by a man's own selfishness. It is possible that, intrusted by God with the care and culture of his own spiritual being, one may mistake the means for the end. But if the *being good* does not end in *doing good*, we may justly question whether in such a case *the meaning of true goodness is understood*. Has not the Good here been supplanted by the Beautiful? Has not Christian duty been construed in terms of æsthetic taste or intellectual pleasure?

The dangers attaching to a love of self-culture, dissociated from the true spirit of Christ, have been frequently illustrated. Indeed, culture has been preached by many as a religion; and this must be carefully distinguished from the Christian virtue we have been commending.

The life of the German poet Goethe, while in very many respects a noble life, furnishes us with warning as to the dangers accompanying excessive devotion to culture.[1] There were passages in his life that no Christian man can approve of, but which the cultivation of the æsthetic side of his nature seemed to himself to justify. His philosophy was entirely "of the earth earthy." He condemns all introspection and self-abasement because of sin as a waste of energy, and makes culture the supreme end of life. "Piety is not an end, but a means of attaining the highest culture by the purest tranquillity of soul." And to maintain this atmosphere of tranquillity, so favourable to the cultivation of the mind, he passed by some duties which to a Christian man are of the most imperative character. Nor can we forget how Goethe, the high priest of culture, spoke of Luther, the preacher of righteousness, whose spirit of self-sacrifice Goethe was unable to appreciate.

It is not easy, between the two sides on this question, to hold the balance even. Yet there can be no doubt that self-love, in the sense of a desire to secure our highest well-being, is a law of our nature recognised by Christ. In his other sermon on the love of our neighbour (Sermon XI.), Bishop Butler, with his usual

[1] Cf. B. Saunders, *Maxims and Reflections of Goethe*, chaps. ii. and iii.

clearness and good sense, has distinguished between this and other affections. He maintains that self-love and benevolence are so far from being opposed, that the latter may be the easier way of gratifying the former. "Self-love does not constitute this or that to be an interest or good; but an interest or good being constituted by nature and supposed, self-love only puts us upon obtaining and receiving it." In the service of God self is not to be sacrificed *in the sense of being extinguished*, for this would be nothing else than the extinction of self urged in Brahmanism. In Christianity self *is to be renewed and purified*; it is so taken up into union with Christ as to reappear strengthened and transfigured into finer meetness for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

When a man of conscience says, "I cannot do this act of injustice; *I owe it to myself* to be just and upright," we feel no inconsistency in his words. Indeed, it is *the very first law of morality that a man shall be faithful to his moral constitution.* It would be selfish in him to seek to cease to be himself, to seek to be, for example, an angel or a beast. It is not selfish to aim at reaching his moral best. It is his duty to live up to the highest level of ethical possibility, and to make the culture of his true self the object of his most ardent desire.

The Christian personality is a good of itself when

by God's grace it is renewed and cleansed. Utilitarianism denies this, and makes it only a means to action, and not in itself an end.[1] According to this Hedonistic estimate, the good man is simply an instrument, guaranteed to go on steadily producing the greatest amount of happiness for himself and for others. But the healthy consciousness of mankind is opposed to such an estimate, and declares that character is an end in itself and not a mere instrument to produce happiness. Man is bound to regard himself as one of the great moral ends of creation. The Sabbath was made for him, not he for it. For this purpose he was dowered with the gifts of reason and knowledge. All his talents he holds as a trustee for this end, to make himself a fit instrument to glorify God and do His will. When, therefore, Hedonism separates conduct from character, and lays the emphasis on conduct, it misses the real significance of both. The ethical importance of conduct is only indirect, being derived solely from its being the outcome and the exponent of character that lies behind it; whereas the ethical importance of character is absolute. It is its own end, and is worthy of love.

Therefore, when one hears the sneer that it is very needless to teach self-love, since we are all too apt

[1] J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chap. iv.

pupils in that school, it only shows us how easy it is *to confound two things essentially different.* Were a Christian man to seek his own spiritual good at the expense of others, were he to withdraw into a hermit life for the sake of his own salvation alone, and ignore the progress of God's Kingdom on earth, the charge of selfishly seeking his own salvation might be established. But when it is remembered that a Christian self-love will make him seek his perfection in the interests of the Master whom he loves, and with a desire to make himself a polished arrow in His quiver, the quality of unselfishness will be seen to characterise this love. And when it is further considered that Christian *society* is made up of individuals, and that were every individual thus conscious of his real spiritual worth, and eager to maintain it, society would soon be regenerated, and the Kingdom of God would come to earth, it will be evident that *the individual's purity affects the whole organism*; and that, while aiming at his own highest moral good, the Christian man is accomplishing at the same time *the moral well-being of society.* Nor will he forget that the rule by which he shall not injure his own moral welfare for the sake of others, requires that he shall not ask others to injure themselves for his sake. We must permit the self-love of our brethren to prescribe for their good all the care and thought and time that our

self-love bids us give to our own moral well-being. This is just the Golden Rule over again. Christian self-love assures the welfare of society in seeking the perfecting of the Christian character. *The highest good of society is thus seen to be at one with the highest good of the individual.*

Another objection has been urged, that it is impossible to perfect one's self by such *formal acts* as private prayer and devout meditation. All these actions terminate upon one's self; and spiritual energy, it is affirmed, cannot be stored up as one stores electricity for future use. It is no doubt true that mere meditation by itself, apart from action, has no moral quality. But meditation is the necessary preliminary to useful action. It will guide and stimulate action. Prayer and meditation have often proved the mainspring of moral courage, and have helped to create decision of character. In these days of competition and of express speed in trade, Christian meditation has not a little value. Prayer and fasting and abstinence from stimulants help to undermine the power of the flesh, and to give an ascendancy to the spirit over the body. True self-love will always urge to temperance. It will keep the body under, "buffet the body and bring it into bondage," in order to win the incorruptible crown. Average human nature is the better for such discipline. To many, in truth, it is a

moral necessity. Without it virtuous energy would be dissipated. He that would perfect himself must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Christ. The only way to maintain Christian character in strength and vigour is to keep in touch with the Lord all the day through. And he that will do this must often ignore the claims of his lower nature.

We must, however, be careful to keep in mind that the end of all this is *moral freedom*. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, we may be sure there is liberty. When we speak of the formation of Christian character we must not begin to Judaise. Rules are good enough for us in the days of our minority and so long as we are babes in Christ. But true self-love will find such rules of use only for a time of necessity. Love and freedom are inseparable. A submission to Christian ascetics, which is not voluntarily and freely chosen, possesses no moral value.

Aristotle never uttered a grander truth than when he said that virtue is not virtue until it has become *a habit of the soul*, or as spontaneous as a habit. Which just means that virtue is not virtue until it is loved, and indeed ceases to be a yoke at all. All moral progression is from nature and bondage up to freedom and love. Perhaps nothing is more distinctive of character moulded by Christ than that, as a

man grows more conscientious, duty to him becomes less a task and more and more a delight.

But while Christ does not desire that His disciples should be anchorites, bound to every minutest duty by vows and "Rules of the Blessed Life," on the other hand, rules have their place, and are not to be despised. They are very helpful in the formation of habits. While we are fighting a daily battle against the disorder of our moral nature, and are standing between the insubordination of lower motives and the imperatives of conscience, we are helped by those rules which are given by Christian ascetics. Natural impulse will not be controlled and organised into righteous character by mere resolves, nor even by sitting down and writing these resolves on the clean page of our morning diary. There will be many a hard struggle ere the character attains to Christ's likeness.

Only let it be understood that the purpose is to reach freedom, and that all such imposition of arbitrary rules, all discipline and restraint, must be directed to the one great end of progress in goodness. Otherwise these will tend rather *to injure than to develop* the character of the Christian. They are justified only when they are the exercises of love, when from their very love of God men count not their pleasures dear unto them. "For the dominion

of the spirit over the flesh and worldly motion makes the soul light and free. And the perfect, in the strictest sense of the word, would be those in whom freedom and grace were in quite unbroken harmony, and the will of God was no more in any respect an unfulfilled requirement" (Martensen, *Indiv. Eth.*, § 162).

TEMPERANCE, OR SELF-CONTROL

And every man that striveth in the games is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, we an incorruptible.—ST. PAUL.

Better to steer with heart and hand
The roaring tide of life, than lie
Unmindful on its flowery strand
Of God's occasions drifting by.
Better with naked nerve to bear
The needles of this goading air,
Than in the lap of sensual ease forego
The godlike power to do, the godlike aim to know.

Give not thy humours sway:
God gave them to thee under lock and key.
—GEO. HERBERT.

Once train the mind to know that at a certain hour of each day it must begin to work in a certain way, and after a short time *it will do so at a word.* The slightest finger touch of purpose will start the machinery. *Only break yourself in to this habit of work*; and when once the process is completed it need never be repeated.—W. J. DAWSON.

Those are the strongest men, not who the most wantonly indulge, but who the most carefully curb, their activities. All debauch is incipient suicide; it is the unseen current beneath the house, which sooner or later washes away the foundations. —PROFESSOR J. S. BLACKIE.

The ethics of Christianity is the ethics of a restored integrity of manhood. It insists that a man be thoroughly cured of himself in order that he may enter into eternal life.—N. SMYTH, D.D.

CHAPTER VIII

Temperance, or Self-Control

Having seen how character originates, we have now to inquire how it is to be built up and strengthened. How is a Christian man to make the most of himself? How is he to be the best that he can be, and to do the most that he can do for his fellowmen? The answer is twofold. If he is to realise his true self, and to fulfil God's purpose through the individuality bequeathed to him, he must know how to discipline himself, and how to accept that education of trial, sorrow, and suffering, through which God's children are perfected.

This control of self, this duty of Christian temperance, presents itself under a negative and positive form. From the one point of view it may be called *self-control*; from the other point of view it is *self-culture* or self-development. The one continually touches the other, and at many points unconsciously glides into it. Yet it is necessary to give each a separate treatment.

Self-control is to every Christian man a primary and essential duty. It is the grand New Testament virtue of *temperance*, a word whose significance is not to be limited to eating and drinking, but is coextensive with the whole duty of self-conquest.

It is one of the mysteries of our existence that we are born into bondage in order that we may achieve our freedom. The most outstanding mark of infancy is *its subjection to feeling*. The child is continually the slave of his own impulses and instincts. Some of these he soon learns to master; yet to many others in the nursery and in the playground he remains a slave. The mind runs wild; imagination is uncontrolled. It is so difficult to concentrate the vagrant thought upon the school tasks, that many youths abruptly quit them and thereby maim their whole manhood. The primary duty of the wise parent is to teach his children that the passions must be curbed, that the lawless troop of instincts must be brought to heel and kept under law; that all perversions of qualities—indecision, ingratitude, undutifulness, impatience—must be counteracted. He who has not gained self-conquest has yet to reach his highest achievement. Self-government is indeed the noblest mark of manhood. Not until this has been attained has human

nature been organised into character. In the management and mastery of self, therefore, we must first of all acquire the virtue of Temperance.

> "Unless above himself he can
> Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!"

In a remarkable passage of his Second Epistle, containing an exposition of Christian morality, the Apostle Peter emphasises this virtue of Temperance by connecting it with knowledge and faith. "In your faith supply virtue, and in your virtue knowledge, and in your knowledge temperance." Through faith there comes into the character *manly energy*, and in the exercise of manly energy there arises a *fuller knowledge* of Christian duty, which at every stage demands the exercise of *temperance*. A clear conception of duty will bring home to every honest man the absolute necessity of knowing how to govern himself. In this evolution of the Christian graces a very important place is given to temperance. It grows out of knowledge: and it leads on to patience and godliness.

In our days the word "temperance" carries with it a narrower connotation than it has in the New Testament. There it implies the general idea of restraint from every kind of excess. This ἐγκράτεια, this self-government, includes all those duties that

pertain to the regulation of the instincts and desires of our complex nature.

The appetites and instincts, implanted at birth, are blind impulses that have no knowledge of the end for which they are designed, or of the means by which that end can be attained. They have been conferred upon us in order to secure our well-being: and the pleasure that attends our activity and our sleep, our eating and drinking, ensures the attainment of this end.

Besides those blind impulses, there are great *natural springs of action* which are accompanied by some knowledge of the end to which they prompt. Such is the desire for pleasure, for fame, for a good name. Such, too, is the desire for knowledge, so deep and universal; there being between its object and the constitution of the human mind such an adaptation that, whenever this knowledge is presented to the mind, all men recognise its suitableness, and wish to obtain it.

As it is with instincts and affections, so it is with *all gifts of body and mind.* None of them is to be eradicated, but all are to be trained to serve their proper end. The mental and physical endowments that distinguish individuals, fine sensations, tastes, aptitudes, skill of eye, ear, and voice, are all intended to give enrichment and variety to human life. Some

gifts, such as humour and wit, have been held to belong to a class that could not be consecrated to Christian service. But we know that these may give zest and seasoning to conversation, and may be made actively subservient to the highest interests and to the refutation of error. There is not in our constitution an ethical dualism. In realising the end of life, every power has its place and use.

Yet we see how every one of these qualities tends to run into excess. Zeal easily glides into impatience. Humour is apt to develop into frivolity and depreciation of others. An excessive love of Art quickly brings about a contempt for the common round of everyday duty, and creates discontent with one's surroundings. The virtue of liberality is very close to the vice of the spendthrift; while, on the other hand, economy and thrift may quickly pass into miserly greed. It requires much prayer and watchfulness to control our desires and discipline those impulses that would injure our character in the onrush of their strength.

The Christian man is to be "temperate in all things." His whole self must be built up, organised, and controlled by one dominating power. We often use *the word intemperance*; but do we think what it means? Nothing less than the disorganisation of our being, the insubordination and the riot

of the senses, each asserting its own independent right to exist. The intemperate life is therefore the inconsistent life, a life without a purpose, a ship without a chart, a horse without a guiding rein. One part has claimed to be the whole; one appetite or desire has seized the helm and revolted against its lawful officers. But the temperate life is one in which all the energies are controlled by a Christian conscience for the total well-being. It is the unity of body, soul, and spirit. In such a life the whole self is in every part of it. *It is a life organised and integrated;* and consequently it possesses the calm strength and consistent wholesomeness of a Christian personality, in which the relative rank of each part, physical and spiritual, is recognised, and the whole is subjected to the control of reason and conscience.

The virtue of self-control is to be exercised, first, in reference to our bodily frame. Hunger and thirst are implanted in us in order to secure that the body shall have its proper nourishment. It is right that we should remove the uneasy sensations which they produce. But their gratification must be entirely subservient to the one end of maintaining the body in vigorous health. If temperance is not to give the law to our table, we shall soon find that gluttony will dull the edge of our mind, or intoxication drug our conscience with its deadly opiates. If chastity

and continence do not regulate our imagination, and exclude every impure thought, we shall discover that the peace of our mind is gone, and that our heart is crusted over with the leprosy of the most loathsome vice. All bodily cravings are characterised by a strength and urgency that make it absolutely imperative that a Christian should learn to "keep the body under." Their gratification, also, is easily accomplished, and brings *immediate* pleasure; while mental and spiritual pleasures, being won only after severe toil, are *more remote.* Hence the force of their temptation overwhelms many a youth, who ere long finds himself in the power of a brute force that carries every consideration of reason before it. And even the swinish fare and the alien land will not always open his eyes, and bring him back in penitence from his prodigality.

There is *but one way* in which we can master the body. It is by the old and well-tried method of St. Paul. The body must be kept under by the spirit, and even at some points we must altogether deny its right to recognition. Every man has his "besetting sin"; everyone discovers that he is weak in some point, and that at that point sin presents itself with peculiar power and fascination. The luxurious man must guard against his love of ease; the choleric man must watch his hot temper; the

phlegmatic man must fight against his lackadaisical supineness. The moral task for each presents its own difficulties. But, for all, there exists the necessity of denying whatever would enslave us in any immoderate indulgence.

On this matter Christian Ethics speaks in plainest terms. It reminds us of the language uttered by our Lord with such tremendous emphasis, "If thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee."

It is better to enter into the kingdom of life halt or maimed, than to keep the hand and miss that kingdom. *The best thing would be to keep both.* But if that is impossible, better surely to mortify a part than to lose life eternal. If a Christian man finds that it is impossible for him to enjoy God's gifts in moderation, then his duty clearly is abstinence. The law of temperance prescribes *only moderation.* But for many men the only possible way to moderation is by the vigorous practice of abstinence. However strange it may seem, it is found to be easier for many to abstain altogether than to permit a moderate indulgence. Therefore there is nothing to boast of in total abstinence. But for the sake of one's self and also for the sake of others, the way of safety for many lies there.

This process of self-repression is to a certain extent

one of self-mutilation, and can never be easy or pleasant. The strenuousness is implied in the very language of the Lord. It is impossible to shut one's eyes to the fact that *for some persons* the only way to holiness is by the stern suppression of the sensual nature. This will be possible by the aid of His grace and Holy Spirit. But even this will not make the work easy, nor deaden the nerve to the pain of the sacrifice. Yet the Christian man need not complain, as if he were made a martyr by his faith. There is not an athlete in these days, who, in order to win the prize in some college contest or on the athletic field, will not go through a course of severest training, demanding abstinence and great self-denial. "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, we the incorruptible" crown of Christian character.

It must not be forgotten that the exhortation of Christ was only in the case of such as could not go into life without this maiming of the body. All that Christ says is that it is *better* to enter into life halt and maimed than not to enter at all. But *the best* is to conserve all for God and enter life whole and sound. This is the great argument for the giving of youth to God, with all its powers and faculties dedicated from birth to His service. The other is only second best. God desires that the whole body, soul, and spirit may be His. He has no wish to

see any part of our nature atrophied or undeveloped. The maimed man may serve Christ with his limping gait, but the complete man will serve Him better. "I pray God your whole body, soul, and spirit may be preserved blameless."

To emphasise the importance of this duty of Control, we must in a word refer to *the terrible Nemesis* that follows with sure foot the indulgence of carnal sins. The body is made by God to be itself the instrument of a bad man's punishment. In his own flesh, it may be many years after he had ceased to indulge, or after all the pleasure of indulgence has gone, he endures the direful penalty of youthful transgression against the laws of sobriety and of chastity. The habitually intemperate man very soon encounters retributive justice in the derangement of his vital functions; and later on in the loss of a balanced judgment, and of clearness of mind. Then come nervous debility and the horrors of incipient delirium; and in their turn the whip of scorpions is daily laid upon his back. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap."

But this may not be the end of it. If he is a father, this terrific predisposition may *descend by inheritance*, and sons and daughters may grow up to hate the memory of him that begat them. Hereditary descent becomes a consuming curse to every

man who sins against temperance and purity; and in the imbecility or intemperance of his descendants that curse is prolonged and multiplied. The Divine government is moral, and it is terribly in earnest in the infliction of punishment on the sins of the flesh. The certainty of it should give pause to every mind. No discipline can be too severe, no effort too strenuous, that may help us to gain the victory over sins of the body.

Two special rules may be here added: (1) *We must not depreciate the body.* It too has been redeemed by Jesus Christ. Therefore God can have no pleasure in the mutilation or abuse of any of its powers. Every organ has an ethical claim on our carefulness. Every function has its place in the organic structure of a healthy Christian life. "The Church of the Son of God is not most happily conceived as a hospital for one-eyed and one-armed saints." The body is to be presented to God a *living* sacrifice, in the full vitality of its powers. The soul cannot reach its perfection apart from the health and well-being of the material form with which it is clothed. The duty of its preservation is a high Christian obligation.

Perhaps the most elevating thought in Scripture, in this connection, is the statement of St. Paul that the body is really the sanctuary or temple of the Holy Ghost, where He now dwells, and which is des-

tined to be glorified with Christ in heaven. Shall we not exercise the greatest care over that which has been so honoured? shall we prostitute the temple of God, and make it the instrument of harlotry? This would be a breach of the communion between the body and Christ, its Head. Unchastity is the climax of sin against the body and its Lord.

The habit of depreciating the body, and the longing sometimes expressed to escape from it and to shuffle off this mortal coil, are to be condemned. We are neither to flee from death nor to court it. There may be a false love of death as well as a wrong fear of life. A desire for death is often a cowardly shrinking from the duties of life, or from the chastising hand of God. A morally healthy man should not know it; or, if it occur to him, it should be instantly banished as unworthy of one who is God's son redeemed from the power of sin and death. The Pessimism of to-day offers many an apology for suicide. But that Pessimism is itself the Nemesis of modern scepticism, and is the logical outcome of *the devitalising influence of unbelief*. A Christian faith will brace him for all the moral tasks of life. Perhaps no teacher of ethics has spoken more strongly on this point than Kant, who regarded suicide as a breach of a sacred trusteeship, and the subversion of morality. "It is a contradiction that a person should

have authority to withdraw himself from all responsibility. . . . To destroy the subject of morality in his own person is as much as to annihilate morality itself" (*Metaphysic of Ethics*). Suicide is a base violation of the first principles of morality. The modern frequency of this crime is only a proof of the presence of moral disease, probably brought about by the impatient haste to be rich, and by the express speed at which trade is now conducted. But

> "No man possessed of healthful breath
> Hath ever truly longed for death."

(2) *We must not pamper the body.* Through its appetites and instincts, designed to protect it, it will make loud claims for indulgence and ease. But the health of the body is a sacred trust committed to us by God, and this trusteeship requires that we stringently comply with all the well-known laws that govern health. The importance of an acquaintance with elementary hygienic laws cannot be overestimated. The larger proportion of bodily diseases are preventable, if only we resolutely act on physiological knowledge. And here our best guides are Temperance and exercise. The body craves for indulgence in food; and if men yield to it, how soon does gluttony dull the spirit, and they become of the earth earthy! It craves for ease; and how soon does

sloth find excuses for neglect of work and for over-indulgence in sleep!

The unclean spirit knocks loudly at the door and demands admission with many plausible arguments. "Why does God permit us to have within us the passions that would ruin our well-being? Why does He not keep us pure? Why make our life a constant fight against evils that our forefathers committed and that we inherited?" If we are honest with ourselves, the answer is not difficult. Life is a gymnastic field, and moral muscle can be developed only by moral athletics. "Our passions are like the weights and bars of the gymnasium, against which we must measure ourselves at the price of sweat and effort." The primrose path of dalliance produces *a molluscous, not a manly*, type of Christian. Better for us that we should have to wrestle and fight and pray, than that we should be puling babes, fed on milk not on meat, and coddled into holiness without effort or struggle. Not otherwise can we enter the kingdom of God; not otherwise bring our instincts and passions into subjection to the spirit.

Among the exercises prescribed in Scripture as instrumental to holiness, and to which the name of "ascetics" has been given, there is one that closely relates to the body. *Fasting* was by our Lord conjoined with prayer as a condition of spiritual improve-

ment. By the Protestant Churches, in their reaction from Romish customs, it has been regarded with suspicion, or else neglected. By most Christians it is held to be as a "counsel of perfection." Yet in a practice which our Lord on different occasions sought to commend and to regulate, we may be sure there is valuable help for our spiritual life and our character.

It is chiefly as an adjunct to prayer that fasting is commended. Undoubtedly it tends to give intensity to prayer, itself being practically a petition not in word, but in act. In every earnest life there come times when the claims of the body, however legitimate they be, have to be ignored or even resisted, lest they should clip the wings of the spirit in its aspirations towards God. As in business life there arise crises when men deem it right to draw on their physical capital of vitality for higher ends, so in the spiritual life hours of crisis come when the severest self-denial has to be exercised. Fasting is but one aspect of that self-denial which is a condition of all successful prayer. Prayer is a reaching out after the unseen and intangible; and abstinence from food is the letting go of the seen and temporal. For the sake of a higher good the consecrated soul resolves to "lay aside this weight," as well as its besetting sin, that it may run its heavenward race with fleeter foot.

In His great temptation it was by hunger that

Christ, our Exemplar, was tempted, and it was in fasting that He foiled the darts of the tempter. He who was well pleased with the fasting and self-denial of His Son in that testing time, promises to reward with the gift of spiritual power those who are prepared to surrender for a time the lawful satisfaction of this appetite. In many of the biographies of saintly men and women we learn that, when wrestling in intercession for others, they felt greatly helped by this scriptural practice. I cannot doubt but that, in the discipline of character, there may be many who will find fasting an ally and a counteractive to the full-fed habits of this luxurious age. "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

All this, as our Lord has said, is for the private, not the public life. Moreover, the prize is worth the price. And it is to be no sad, soulless experience. "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face; that thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall recompense thee."

A limit must, of course, be set to this Christian exercise, by the laws of bodily health. There must be no permanent injury to the physical frame. But in many instances abstinence has benefited the body not less than the spirit. For all in health it is a wise rule rather to underfeed than overfeed the body.

The soul will be less cloyed by the senses; the body itself better fitted for its tasks. And the result will be a character of well-balanced proportions, maintaining a spiritual unity and integrity that will keep the appetites in control, the body in chastity, and the heart in purity. There will then be little danger of running into an excessive and self-mutilating asceticism, which is opposed by the primal law of self-preservation. And the ministry of all the members to one another will be maintained in the due subordination of each to the good of the whole.

In resisting the solicitations of the senses, many virtues are developed that are of great value in forming character. One cannot oppose and overcome sloth, gluttony, excessive indulgence in food and drink, hot temper and incontinence, without gaining in Christian manhood. Slowly but surely Christian graces will root themselves in us. The virtue of temperance will be strengthened; we shall be clothed with chastity and purity of mind. In our daily calling we shall gain diligence, humility, self-denial, and shall thereby acquire both depth of sympathy and breadth of character. There will also grow within our mind a general reasonableness in regard to all recreations and pleasures, a reasonableness that will be satisfied only with such of these as can promote healthy and vigorous life.

Those virtues cannot be called shining graces. They are the commonplaces of all teachers of ethics. Every school of moralists, from Solomon and Socrates downward, has emphasised them. But for all that they greatly need repetition in the present day, and they are not to be spoken of, still less thought of, by Christian men as trifles. Or they are so only in the meaning of that word in the mouth of the famous sculptor, Michael Angelo, who, in reply to the unobservant critic, uttered the well-known aphorism: "Yes, these things are trifles. *But trifles make perfection; and perfection is no trifle.*" Every sincere and humble Christian will be careful to cultivate and to maintain these fundamental virtues of the Christian character.

THE TEMPERAMENTS AND TEMPER

And ever against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse:
Such as the meeting soul may pierce
In notes, with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out:
These delights, if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.
—L'ALLEGRO.

These pleasures, Melancholy, give
And I with thee will choose to live.
—Il PENSEROSO.

My nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.
—SHAKESPEARE.

The star of the unconquered will.
—LONGFELLOW.

That, if weak women went astray,
Their stars were more in fault than they.
—MATTHEW PRIOR.

The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.—JEREMIAH.

Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap.—ST. PAUL.

A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy-body to decay.
—DRYDEN.

CHAPTER IX

The Temperaments and Temper

Among the influences spoken of in Chapter III., as affecting character, was Temperament. Temperament is *the natural ground-work of character.* Its importance, as colouring our conceptions of duty, and as modifying the action of the will, is very great; and it demands the attention of all who desire to know themselves and to acquire self-control.

Some physicians have regarded the temperaments simply as morbid conditions of the body, to be cured by a proper attention to the laws of health and by a careful selection of food. So much did this view prevail, that for some time the subject was deemed by moralists unworthy of consideration.

But of late, and especially in relation to the subject of Character, the temperaments have been much studied. The more that we have come to recognise the close connection of mind with body, the more we have come to estimate at its real

worth everything connected with the physical constitution. While the full treatment of the subject belongs to physiology, yet so many of the grounds of individuality are found in the physical constitution, that, in considering the question of self-control, we must devote considerable attention to the subject of Temperament.

It is usual to speak of *four distinct temperaments*, and to classify them, either in relation to the objective world outside of us, or in regard to the psychical world within. Proceeding on the principle of the former classification, we find persons very differently affected towards the world that is external to their personality.

The man of action, of resolution and will, takes up an attitude, to the world, of determined resistance to its evil and its imperfections. He will not submit, if he can help it, to its domination. He defies circumstances, shapes his own career, and, like the torrent, seeks to channel his own path. Every impediment, arising from birth or environment, only tends to rouse him into more intense activity, that he may impress upon circumstances his own mind, and turn them by strength of will to his own use. This is the mark of the *choleric temperament*. It gives force and energy to character. It usually coexists with a considerable

amount of passionate fervour, and is often found allied to enthusiasm. It is full of the strenuous striving of an Alexander, a Cæsar, a Luther, a Napoleon. It tends to throw a man upon outward activity. But it no less impels the student and the philosopher to such action as will bring to realisation their fondly cherished theories. This is pre-eminently the active, outgoing temperament, set on high resolve and on the accomplishment of ideals.

It is a temperament that is usually allied to useful qualities; and, unless counteracted by other principles, it will develop into a prompt, decisive, and energetic character. A choleric man can never see a cause requiring help and remain an idle spectator: he will rush to the front of the fray, and take his full share of it. In whatever business he is engaged, he will concentrate his whole mind upon it; he will bring to every scheme a strength of purpose, an energy of mind, and a zeal that guarantee success. It is the temperament *of the diligent, pushing merchant, of the active, capable politician, of the successful military leader.* Constancy, enduring heroism, and unflagging perseverance characterise it. It can endure, even to martyrdom. In a St. Paul it will calmly face the cruelties of persecution and the agonies of martyrdom.

Such a temperament gives colour to the work of even the most humdrum business life. There it will recognise a scene of moral conflict and vigorous striving. And if opportunities of further effort are exhausted, life becomes all but unbearable. A man like Ulysses cannot abide it—

> "It little profits that an idle king,
> By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
> Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole
> Unequal laws unto a savage race,
> That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
> *I cannot rest from travel*: I will drink
> Life to the lees."

At the same time, it is a temperament that must make acknowledgment of *many infirmities*. For its virtues are foiled by not a few weaknesses. The powerful will is never far removed from despotic harshness and imperious temper. It can ill brook delay or opposition. Prudence and slow-footed caution it abhors. In furtherance of its purpose, it is apt to forget the quality of mercy and the claims of the ignorant and the weak. Very apt is the choleric man to desire and to demand the first place in every enterprise, and the leadership of every cause. Like the Homeric hero, he must excel—

> "Αἰεὶν ἀριστευεῖν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων."

In the Church we usually find that the choleric

member is a drastic reformer. He delights in the overthrow of his enemies, and is more anxious to secure their defeat than their conversion to the truth. Like Elijah, he would as soon slay the priests of Baal as win them to God's side. And when success tarries, and disappointment and delay have to be endured, he not infrequently, like the same Old Testament prophet, sulks and retires from the field with the cry, "Lord, take away my life; for I am no better than my fathers."

We must remember that strength of character does not consist in self-assertion or perpetual forwardness, but in the self-control that enables a man to speak and to act strongly at the right moment. The man who has a tendency to heat and passion should take care not to let the tinder within reach of his powder. He should often close his teeth upon his tongue, and be silent until his hot blood has cooled and reason has asserted itself. The more he claims the help of the Holy Spirit, and cleaves to great and worthy causes, the less will he need to bemoan his temper; and the less likely will he be to make the mistake (a not infrequent one, strange to say, in men of this temperament) of apologising for strong words when he has courageously rebuked flagrant sin. He will "speak boldly, as he ought to speak"; but he must be careful not to forget the

command, "Be ye angry, and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

Contrasted with, and yet somewhat akin to, the choleric is the *melancholic* temperament. They are related in this respect, that they are pre-eminently characteristic of the masculine nature, while the sanguine and phlegmatic temperaments are more frequently found among women. The melancholy person shrinks from the field of action, where his choleric brother is at home, to dwell in the region of fancy and contemplation. It is the temperament of the poet, who lives in the realm of imagination, as well as of the thinker, who is given to continuous trains of reasoning. In religion it not infrequently leads its subject into a mystic quietism, which may be but another kind of self-seeking, and which is far away from that moral enthusiasm favoured by Christianity. It has often led to the hermitage and the nunnery, and to much unhealthy introspection. Its tendency has been to dissolve the Kingdom of God into a discipleship of isolated saints, whose beautiful saintliness we cannot but admire, while we regret that they should be content "rather to rail at the ill than fight for the good."

Aristotle speaks of this temperament in terms of high praise, and affirms that it generally belongs to men of genius. There is no doubt that it helped

to produce the fine thought of Plato, the sombre imagination of Dante, and the gloomy outlook on life of Thomas Carlyle. To such minds the inner world lies open. They can retire from the active duties of life without any sense of loss, and live in the solitude of profound thought.

The weak point in this temperament is that it is so fond of looking at the gloomy side of things. It may find even a morbid joy in dwelling upon the miseries of life, since they afford food for its imagination. It delights to keep its finger on the spiritual pulse, and makes a daily diagnosis of its moral ailments. It fills diaries with its fluctuating moods. Instead of turning the eye away from failings to Divine help, it broods on its backslidings, and has no assurance of God's love. It laments "the peaceful hours it once enjoyed"; and lives more in the memory of a past conversion than in the healthy enjoyment of a present salvation.

In its morbid stages it is a proper subject of inquiry by medical and psychological science. Its vagaries and gloom have filled many asylums, where the terrible calm of a fixed despair broods over the melancholy spirit. Some of the noblest names in English literature have succumbed to this morbid vein of constitutional sadness, that had been fostered by their studies or by mental overwork. Every

reader will remember how it threw its dark shadow over the finely-fibred brain of William Cowper. The melancholic man should carefully watch this tendency to waste his strength in dissatisfied longings after subjective ideals and in pessimistic broodings over the dark mysteries of life.

The *sanguine* temperament, so far from retiring from the world, seeks to come into constant contact with it. It is very open to outward impressions that increase vitality and awaken feeling. The name indicates the close connection that blood has with temperament. "The blood is the life"; and a sanguine disposition is one of the sure endowments of a full-blooded man. Such a man naturally overflows with vitality. He is bright with hopefulness, sees no lion in the path, and is not cognisant of any difficulties that can bar the way to success. The caution and patience of his phlegmatic neighbour are to him intolerable, or at least unintelligible. He rushes at his ends without much reflection, cheered by his immense hopefulness and assured by his sense of present power. Being more acted upon by impressions than by reason, he is too often the victim of impulses. Hence it is that in religion he is in danger of becoming a Mr. Pliable or a stony-ground hearer, who does not well stand the heat of persecution.

No man is more easily moved than he at a revival season. The subtle influence of the awed congregation reaches him through every pore. In the moment of intense emotion he will make professions that in a few weeks are flung to the winds. And he who bravely said, "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest," soon helps to swell the ranks of apostasy from the Cross.

This temperament has many excellent qualities, and has lent help to many a languishing cause. Freed from volatility and fickleness, its hopefulness and its courage make it an invaluable ally. In the realm of mind its thirst for knowledge and hopeful expectancy of discovery has sustained many a student in protracted research. It has been the soul of social philanthropy; and its lofty ideals, descried at first, have often in after years been realised in sober fact.

Youth is the time of bounding blood, and therefore this is pre-eminently the temperament of that time. Indeed, some maintain that the temperaments belong to the different stages of life. They would hold that a man passes through each of them: in youth he is sanguine, in manhood choleric, in advancing age melancholic, and in old age falls into the phlegmatic temperament.

Whatever truth may be in this theory, it is a

fact that youth is full of hope and warm enthusiasms. It beholds all its schemes bathed in the purple light of the dawn; and with a stout heart it attacks and overcomes many an obstacle that would frighten away the cautious prudence of old age. It is this sanguine spirit that makes the aged stand by and leave difficult tasks in the hands of younger men.

The great leaders of progress have all been characterised by this dominant quality. They heeded not discouragement; they recked not of difficulty. They heard the call of duty; and for them the Alps ceased to exist as a barrier. They never lost sight of the star of their hope. They obeyed the impulse of their lofty moral ideals, and so became great moral forces among men—

> "Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
> Strengthen the wavering line,
> 'Stablish, continue the march,
> On to the bound of the waste,
> On to the city of God."

This temperament is not without its dangers. Youth loves novelty, and is inclined to undervalue old and established truths. Its support is easily won in favour of what is new, even though it be not true. Names and words move it by their associations. It feels equal to all the tasks that can

be laid upon it, and is consequently rash and indiscreet. Yet happy is he who can retain his young feelings, and carry them through maturity into age without getting soured into pessimism and dulled by *disillusionment*. We know no sadder sight than that of one who was once enthusiastic in the service of Christ, but who is now cooled down into a sarcastic spirit, and only a drag when he should have been an inspiration. Only let fickle moodishness be got rid of, and in the sanguine Christian man we have a splendid recruit for every good cause. The world's march of progress, the civilisation of mankind, and the conversion of heathen nations to Christianity, all need men with the courage of this hopeful enterprising temperament sanctified and sweetened in the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Last of all, and in strong contrast with all the others, comes the *phlegmatic* temperament. It is far removed from the energetic practical nature, and is full of repose and restfulness. Opposed to all passion and violence, it is apt to purchase peace at any price, and sacrifice honour to easy quietude.

This is naturally the temper that belongs to age and experience. We mean, that age favours calmness and coolness. Its heats are over. It has seen so many schemes miscarry, and found so many

men untrustworthy, that it is exceedingly cautious. Its passions have burned themselves out; and life tends to run to the lees, and to find in rest its best form of enjoyment.

But the temperament is not peculiar to old age. By Professor Dorner it is spoken of as the "habitual mood, having a natural tendency to preserve the equilibrium between the outward and the inward, the temperament of continuity or of identity with itself." It is in many ways helpful to a steady and well-balanced character. The phlegmatic man will always act in that calm deliberate manner in which he can make the most of his talents. Caution will prevent his rushing into error with the precipitancy that costs his sanguine brother such bitter experience. His speech is marked by discretion; his calm tones impress us with the feeling that his is an unprejudiced mind, and his judgment therefore just.

In the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament this disposition is much praised. Heat and fury are such marked features of Orientals, that one can understand how the Wise Man would value that which "gives prudence to the simple, to the young men knowledge and discretion." It might have saved Moses from "speaking unadvisedly with his lips," and Uzziah from being smitten of God for his rashness. In the New Testament one cannot help

thinking of that typically phlegmatic individual, the town-clerk of Ephesus, whose counsel to "do nothing rashly," since the law-courts were open to all complainers, had such an excellent effect upon the excited Ephesian mob.

Among the disciples of Christ we find a Nicodemus, slow to believe, cautious in coming, yet firmly holding by the faith when once he had grasped it. Among the apostles we have James, who was voted into the chair which his unbiased judgment and calm wisdom eminently fitted him to occupy.

Like the others, this temperament has its good and its bad qualities. On its weak side it is weak indeed. It tends to render a man soft, pliable, one who is easily pushed to the wall, a bad master, and a worse parent. Such a man, through sloth or indifference, loses the respect of his neighbours, and comes also to lose respect for himself. Tennyson has portrayed him in the person of Earl Yniol—

> "He keeps me in this ruinous castle here,
> Where doubtless he would put me soon to death,
> But that his pride too much despises me:
> And I myself sometimes despise myself;
> For I have let men be, and have their way;
> Am much too gentle, have not used my power:
> Nor know I whether I be very base
> Or very manful, whether very wise

> Or very foolish; only this I know,
> That whatsoever evil happen to me,
> I seem to suffer nothing heart or limb,
> But can endure it all most patiently."

Many virtues are kindred to this temperament. Prudence, clear-headedness, restfulness, patience, stability, constancy, are all found connected with it. The phlegmatic man may be slow in coming to a decision, but he is usually firm in holding to the conclusion at which he has arrived. When freed from sloth it has a disposition that is admirable. Its sobriety, its calm equipoise and patient contentment, are qualities above all praise. That it is not necessarily bound up with indolence of mind, is proved by the fact that many great leaders and skilled generals have been men of a phlegmatic disposition. The greatest thinker of last century was such; yet Immanuel Kant was no lethargic workman. But his temperament was conducive to that tranquillity and equipoise of mind which were essential to philosophical pursuits and to ethical study. It enabled him to despise power, and wealth, and honour: and probably also it helped him to arrive at the lofty conclusion of his moral philosophy, that a Good Will is the only thing which is absolutely and altogether good, and that in contrast with it the bounties of fortune and even the gift of health

are of little worth. No one can study Kant's Philosophy without feeling that he is in an atmosphere of dispassionateness and calm impartiality.

The fact is that each temperament has the defect of its qualities, and we must not speak of one to the prejudice of another. He who would attain to a well-disciplined character must very carefully study his disposition, and be intimately acquainted with its tendencies. If he remain ignorant of these, he will be at the mercy of others who may trade upon his weakness, and he will be unaware of the rocks on which he may yet wreck his reputation.

Those temperamental qualities cannot be termed virtues, since they belong to the physical constitution, and are inherited by us. But they may be transmuted into virtues by moral culture. Aristotle would attribute no value to virtues naturally acquired, and affirms that they become virtues in the proper sense of the word only when they have been taken into the will by self-conscious appropriation. Correctly viewed, the temperaments are the starting-points of our education, the goal of which is character. And the starting-point determines the method of training and the course to be pursued. Nor can it be denied that when the temperament is pronouncedly marked, it will always give colour and type to character.

Here each man has his ethical problem assigned to him. Well for him, if insight be also given to know the weaknesses that attach themselves to his disposition! Better still, if he can appropriate to himself the excellences of the other temperaments, and so make his character rich and harmonious. These excellences are not mutually exclusive; there is no schism in our moral constitution. He who would reach a perfect all-round character must balance the one with the other; he must strengthen the flightiness of the sanguine with the persistency of the phlegmatic, with the seriousness of the melancholic, and with the practical skill and courage of the choleric temperament. All four complexions contribute qualities that go to make up the perfect character. At the same time there is in each of us a nucleus of individuality which is not lightly to be displaced or rendered colourless. And all growth is by accretion to, rather than destruction of, this individual type. Our limited, familiar self develops into a broader self, including elements strange and unfamiliar at first, but which will be found ultimately to greatly enrich our Christian character.

It need scarcely be said that the temperaments are seldom found alone. Continuous culture and advancing experience tend to produce a combination of them in which the individual colours are blended.

Manhood with its many problems breaks our youthful ideals, and brings to us moods of melancholy. In the calm evening of life, when the past is reviewed through the glass of experience, and the future is full of solemn issues, it is not strange that ardour and passion give place to sober-mindedness, and that the strife of life's battlefields is less attractive than the calm restfulness of the walk with God.

We have said that every man has something of each of these complexions in him, and that he may manifest at different times the features of them all. This is not to deny that at the same time one of them will be the more prominent. It is only to maintain that we inherit different and sometimes antagonistic qualities, and that Nature does not shape men in one mould. Variety and not uniformity is her plan. The infinite combinations of temperament add to the wealth of character, giving as much variety to it as form and colour give to the natural landscape.

Each temperament has its own use and value, and no man is to be despised because he is not endowed with a disposition other than he inherits. It is because he is what he is that he is fitted to occupy a useful niche in the world's workroom, and to exercise an individual influence in society. We deny the right, claimed by certain psychologists, to elect one temperament to the throne of honour. Whatever

temperament a man is born with, he has it from God. It is part of his total self or personality. And he will do his duty and fill the post God meant him to occupy only by the proper culture of it. If he strive to correct the imperfections of one temperament with the good qualities of the others, he will find that, whatever be the physical groundwork of his individuality, he may round it out into the complete whole of well-balanced Christian character.

By some the possibility of such ethical culture has been disputed. Yet, while believing that each Christian man, with the manifold hues of his individuality, is intended by God to reflect the light of heaven at a different angle, we are convinced that the Spirit of Christ is bestowed for the purpose of correcting such imperfections as arise from temperament. St. Paul speaks of many deficiencies in his brethren that had to be supplemented, and prays that what was lacking might be perfected or filled up (1 Thess. iii. 10). These "perfectings" will be as varied as are the defects; but the good Spirit is with every sincere man to counterbalance the excess, and to develop the character into an all-round completeness.

By the grace of God, it is comforting to know, we may make the most uncongenial types of excellence our own. Though born with hot blood, we may attain a meekness like that of Moses, a patience like

that of Job. To the believer all excellences are possible. The sanguine may gain solidity, the dull may acquire hopefulness, the despondent may become joyous, and the choleric temper may be tamed.

How this is to be done we shall discuss at length under the head of the great Dynamic of Duty. Meantime we affirm that the happy experience of many Christians proves that it is possible. And what may be, that, surely, ought to be. It is our duty to escape the dominion of our temperament, and by the aid of Divine means within our reach to supplement the defects of our qualities. We have not reached the full-grown Christian manhood until, ceasing to be lop-sided, we become symmetrical in our growth,—like some grand oak in the royal demesne, spreading itself equally around its big bole and shaping itself in perfect form and beauty up to the topmost twig that looks at the sky. Never should we be content "until we come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Another sphere for the exercise of self-control is to be found in the government of what is called our Temper. We shall not discuss this subject as

one of the malevolent dispositions, but regard it only as it affects character. There can be no doubt that a man of choleric temperament, given to outbursts of hasty temper, stamps himself with a character possessing most unlovely features.

To be born with an irritable disposition does not make a man *pro tanto* unvirtuous, any more than a naturally sweet temper in itself adds to one's stock of virtue. On the other hand, a man may inherit a nervous constitution and hot blood, which make it for him exceedingly difficult to endure certain kinds of temptation. But if he overcomes the tendency to passion, then in such a victory virtue is constituted.

Some people imagine that this vice is redeemed from many of its faults when it assumes the form merely of peevishness. But though it be less outrageous, it does not seem to us to be in any way less culpable. Bishop Butler, in his own grand way, speaks of the use of righteous anger, and then adds: "As to the abuses of anger, which it is to be observed may be in all different degrees, the first which occurs is that which is commonly called passion; to which some men are liable in the same way as others are to epilepsy or any sudden particular disorder. This distemper of the mind seizes them on the least occasion in the world; and perpetually, without any reason at all, they are plainly every day in danger

of running into the most extravagant outrages. Of a less boisterous, but not of a less innocent kind is peevishness, which I mention with pity, with real pity, for the unhappy creatures who from their inferior station or other circumstances or relations are obliged to be in the way of, and to serve for a supply of it. Both these, for aught that I can see, are one and the same principle. But as it takes root in minds of different makes, it appears differently; and so it comes to be distinguished by different names. That which, in a more feeble temper, is peevishness . . . in a temper of greater force and stronger passions, becomes rage and fury. In the one the humour discharges itself at once; in the other it is continually discharging" (Ser. VIII.).

Butler points to the pain which it causes to inferiors. But the worst result of such weakness is, not the unhappiness it creates for others, but the injury which it inflicts upon the man himself. It weakens and warps his character. It blunts his sympathy with men, and it nullifies his usefulness. Long indulged, it makes prayer impossible. A heart filled with bad temper can no more have communion with God, than can a storm-swept lake reflect the blue vault of heaven.

There is a righteous wrath which is commendable and virtuous. It was exhibited by Jesus Christ,

when He was opposed by the malignity and hypocrisy of hollow Pharisaism. It is the legitimate outcome of honest indignation at meanness, cruelty, and other detestable forms of iniquity. It is an ethical excellence, and forms a necessary counteractive and equipoise to the coldness of a phlegmatic nature. Of such righteous wrath we do not here speak.

But anger, the natural ebullition of hot temper, is invariably in Scripture classed among the sins of the flesh. "Strife, wraths, and such like" are works of the flesh, regarding which St. Paul forewarns the Galatians that "they which practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." We somewhat fear that, among the sins which it condemns, the Christian pulpit does not give this one the prominence that it gets in the Word of God. Among many Christians it is scarcely regarded as a sin to be confessed and prayed about. How many good men that we have known seem to be able, by God's help, to overcome every "lust of the flesh" except this one! Great trials they will endure and vanquish; for in the great temptation they will summon the help of the calming, sanctifying Spirit of God. But the little, trifling annoyances of life are too much for them. A child's prattle, a servant's forgetfulness, a pupil's blunder in his lesson, a little disarrange-

ment of the household,—any such trifle will upset their equanimity, and set the blood boiling at fever heat. Or it may be a peevish, discontented spirit that makes everything a subject of blame, and with provoking sarcasm or biting jealousy breeds unhappiness the whole day long, wounds tender hearts, and embitters the whole circle of family life.

Yet surely it is in the endurance of petty trials and in the discharge of life's common duties that the spirit of our holy religion is to be manifested. To meet every one of them with a calm mind, to bear insults, jeers, annoyances by always falling back on the loftiest principle and claiming the aid of Divine grace,—all these things may seem trifling and trite. But it is the only way to win the victory. And to conquer a hot temper, to subdue and keep it under discipline, is a most worthy aim. In the case of many an earnest Christian worker it would remove a serious impediment to his usefulness, and be the copestone to his character.

It was once said of a prominent leader and dignitary in the Church, that he was a very good man, with one slight exception, that of his temper. "With the exception of his temper!" was the wise reply; "as if temper were not three-fourths of our religion."

No man ever thinks that he can justify dishonesty or untruth by pleading in excuse that he was born

with a tendency to such delinquencies, and that such a tendency must be held to diminish his responsibility. Neither can proneness to outbursts of anger be held to palliate the evil. To invent excuses for it, as though it were a physical infirmity, is to blunt the conscience and weaken the needful efforts to overcome it.

Many do not sufficiently realise this, nor bring the great forces of God's Spirit to bear upon the homely task of curing a hastiness of temper. For the eradication of other vices they will watch and pray. But for this one they will invent excuses and palliations, and will probably think it enough to say that they inherited a choleric temperament. But the grace of God is offered to us to subdue and modify our natural dispositions. Perhaps by nothing is the unbelieving world more impressed than by a Christian's calm answer to a rude insult, or by any other subjugation of temper under extreme provocation. This is felt by all to be peculiarly the mark of God's true saints.

The well-known preacher, Fletcher of Madeley, at the beginning of his ministry had been afflicted with outbursts of temper that greatly marred his ministerial usefulness, and all but ruined his character. For three weeks he shut himself up in his study for prayer concerning this sin. He asked God

to glorify Himself by keeping His servant from yielding to his vice. And at last, by Divine help, he was so wonderfully enabled to overcome his passionate temper, that it was said "one would never have known in his old age that Fletcher of Madeley had a temper at all."

Born an original, died a copy.

—FRENCH PROVERB.

The true self is best described as the rational self. It is the universe that we occupy in our moments of deepest wisdom and insight.—PROFESSOR MACKENZIE.

The requirement is that man shall form, overcome, rule, and modify his natural individuality into an organ of personality; not the abstract personality, but that which has been determined from eternity as the character of the individual.—BISHOP MARTENSEN.

Know what thou canst work at, and work at it like a Hercules. —CARLYLE.

It is a common remark that moral codes change from "Do not" to "Do," and from this to "Be."—PROFESSOR DEWEY.

Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.—THE BIBLE.

Give me the man that is not passion's slave,
And I will wear him in my own heart's core,
Yea, in my heart of hearts.

—SHAKESPEARE.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Rolled to starboard, rolled to larboard, when the surge was seething free.
Let us swear an oath and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotus-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.

—TENNYSON.

CHAPTER X

Self-Preservation

Self-control is conditioned by another principle not less important, the great law of self-preservation. If we are to govern and systematise our impulses, and make them subservient to our moral manhood, we are not less bound to see that they be guided to the fulfilment of their God-designed end. The whole of our nature has been redeemed by Christ; and there is not a single part of that integral selfhood that may not be cleansed and consecrated to His service. Every power of body, every faculty of the mind and spirit, has a moral right to be and to be used in its integrity. The law of self-preservation is based upon the duty of Christian symmetry and consecration. Each man owes it to himself that he shall live a healthy, vigorous, and whole Christian life.

This is only another way of saying that every Christian man is bound to be himself.[1] By his

[1] Cf. Illingworth, p. 41.

Maker he is endowed with gifts and qualities that make it possible for him to co-operate with God in the perfecting of his being. This stream of changing desires, this bundle of impulses which make up the raw material of our individual life, must be organised into a Christian personality which shall be so constituted as to realise the ethical ends for which its Creator designed it.

Therefore we must say to every Christian man, "Be yourself. Be true to the impress God has put upon you at your birth. Realise all the rational ends which you specially were intended to fulfil. Be a copy of no other person. Be truly yourself, and be nothing less."

The primary law of our life is to be what God meant us to be. "The Ethics of Christianity is the ethics of a restored integrity of manhood." Within the limits of what is not positively wrong, every man has a right to develop his individuality in his own way. He cannot be forced into the mould of another without effacing his individual qualities and losing his power of greatest service. There is no worthier ambition for a man than to fulfil God's mind regarding himself, and to make God's plan of his life his own resolute endeavour. It is the only way in which he may avoid failure, and make his life a true success. To be where God desires me

to be; to be doing what God wants me to be doing; to be using every one of my God-given faculties as He would have them used; and to be doing this continually week in and week out,—that should surely be the very passion of my heart, as it certainly is the goal of my destiny.

We should remember that if we attempt to shape our nature after the model of some other man, we shall be but poor and servile imitations, instead of being free originals. And to be a servile imitator in character is to lose both the attractive quality of naturalness and the momentum of native force. The French have marked this weak point in character, and crystallised it in the epigram, "Born an original, died a copy." Invariably it has been found that to give up our individuality in favour of the imitation of another, is to surrender our liberty and to lessen our usefulness. Were it to prevail it would be the extinction of all that diversity and variety which are found to exist as a universal law of nature. Worse than this even is the fact, well ascertained, that in all imitation the tendency is to copy the foibles rather than the virtues of our hero, his showy rather than his stable qualities.

It is not the purpose of Christianity to abolish all variety of character, or to cut and prune men

down to a certain type, as gardeners prune a vine or an apple tree. It does not square them to the size of a prescribed sectarian criterion, but rather implants within them a seed of grace that shall grow and expand according to each man's individuality. The fruits of the Spirit among Christ's own disciples were of the most varied kind. How different was the Christian character of St. Paul from that of St. Peter, and the character of St. James from that of St. John! And how different in modes of thought are their Epistles! There is no book that has such wide variety of colour and character as the New Testament, where all the features of human nature and all the graces of the Christian life gather round one centre, and yet each reflects the light in its own hues. And though the Church of Christ has failed to learn this, and by an attempt at a forced uniformity has rent her own unity, we can see what may be called the breadth of view of the great Head of the Church, in that He does not identify Himself with its narrowness, nor confine the reviving influences of His Spirit to any one portion of it. The showers of His grace and the light of His Word come from too high a source to be limited by the partition walls of Churches, or by the idiosyncrasies of individualism. He is repeating to-day the rebuke which He gave to the

uncharitableness of John and to the one-sidedness of Martha and to the murmurs of His disciples, and is showing that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

This law of self-preservation, then, bids us translate the truth of our own personality into all such effort and action as lie within the circumscribed range of our powers. It is the only way to gain inward unity, and to ensure the harmonious working of all our capacities in their full efficiency.

At once it will be evident how this truth balances what we have already said of temperance, and modifies to some extent what we shall have yet to say of self-culture. There is need of care lest exhortations to the Christian grace of self-sacrifice be misunderstood, and lest "dying to self"[1] be interpreted in a Brahmanic or purely mystical sense. Selfishness is the one great sin, which must be uprooted together with all evil affections and lusts. Yet sometimes we have heard the crucifixion of self insisted on in such a way as to leave the impression that nothing less is meant than the extinction of our personality.[2]

But nowhere in Scripture are we taught that a man's *personality* is to be crucified. The egoism, what

[1] Cf. Illingworth, p. 45; cf. Peabody, especially pp. 200–204.

[2] Peabody, p. 208.

has been called the stubborn Me-ism of selfishness, must be rooted out, in order that the Spirit of Christ may control the life. But the Christian personality in its integrity remains. Its control and government do not mean its extinction, but only its repression at some points in order that in all other directions it may express itself with greater forcefulness. Self-denial is to be inculcated, not for its own, but for the gospel's sake. In itself the mutilation or injury of any member of the body cannot be pleasing to Him who is its Creator, and who made the body for moral ends. "In this aspect, as relative ends, as consummation of matter for spirit, our physical powers have worth, and are to be respected in the discharge of our duty of self-preservation."[1]

In all moral discipline there must be self-sacrifice: that is an ethical platitude. But the distinguishing feature of the Christian discipline is the end it has in view when it inculcates this discipline. One religion enforces it as a punishment for excess in an opposite direction. Another bids its votaries quit all pleasure because it is essentially evil, or because the world is wholly corrupt. Far otherwise does Christ speak of the purpose of self-sacrifice. To him it is the way out of slavery

[1] Smyth, *Ethics*, p. 334.

into liberty. Not because pleasure is sinful, or the physical nature accursed, or the world a Devil's world, does He encourage the spirit of self-sacrifice. Our amusements may have been legitimate and our business well conducted; only they so absorbed us as to keep us living in the lower elements of our being. We were paying tribute to the flesh; we were slaves to ambitions that mastered our will, deprived our higher self of its just claims, and cost us the loss of self-respect.

Were it the purpose of Temperance to extinguish all our passions and sensibilities, the task imposed by Ethics would become an impossibility. Our self-hood would then be a form without any contents. We should be unable to build up our sentient, individual nature into the ideal self of Christian character. Certainly the lower nature must be governed at all times by the law of temperance; it must obey and not rule: its place is in the stoke-hole and not on the quarter-deck. But the end of all this self-discipline is positive and not negative; not the annihilation of impulse, but its co-ordination into the force of a regenerate life controlled entirely for Christian ends. These subjugated sensibilities are to be transmuted into holy impulses and noble enthusiasms. The choleric temperament, for example, held in leash, sanctified

and pervaded by the Spirit of Christ, makes a strong and effective character. All our mental and physical qualities may serve Christian uses. They are all needed in the Kingdom of God; and if, from a narrow conception of the gospel, any of them are withdrawn from use or atrophied, we suffer spiritual loss. Christian wisdom will be shown as much in the conservation and consecration of our powers, as in the laboured conquest of them in the interests of a misconceived self-sacrifice.

Certainly the Bible does not flatter mankind when it speaks of the depravity of human nature. It paints sin in the darkest colours. Its doctrine of regeneration is but a statement of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. But here the well-known saying of Pascal may be recalled, that the Bible says the worst about man because it alone says the best about him. It speaks of his life as but a vapour that soon vanishes away; yet it affirms that his true life is hid with Christ in God. It tells him he is down in the miry pit; but it also assures him that through grace he may rise out of the mire and hold an angel's hand. If the revelation be humbling, it is also elevating and ennobling.

It is further to be observed that in His work of gracious renewal God always pays regard to the integrity of human nature. There is no violation of

the constitution of man. In this respect Christianity is infinitely superior to all other religions, some of which degrade his reason, while others would crush out his will or extinguish his personality. From the very ruins of human nature the Word of God shows our essential dignity and greatness. The whole process of restoration is a proof of it. The Incarnation, the Cross, the Resurrection and Ascension, all speak of the magnitude of human nature and its worth in God's sight. The very shadow cast across the abyss of man's shame is the measure of the moral greatness to which through the grace of God he may rise.

It is also to be noticed that in all regenerative work God is very careful to conserve in their vigour all the powers of human nature. He demands that we should yield our will to His higher and better will, but He has no desire that we should become creatures destitute of volition. Good men often pray that they may be nothing, that they may lie at the feet of God as "broken and emptied vessels." Such phrases may rightly express the depth of penitence and abasement before God which becomes sinful and backsliding children. Yet the Apostle Paul maintains the worth of his personality to the Corinthians, even when acknowledging his nothingness: "For in nothing am I behind the very chiefest of the apostles, though I be nothing" (2 Cor. xii. 11).

All the saints in Scripture confess their nothingness before God in the sense of disowning all original merit. Yet they never speak of themselves as the mere creatures of fatalism, as mere straws upon the stream, or feathers floating in the wind. Philosophical Pessimism regards man as merely a machine, with no responsibility and no hope, and therefore with no free will. But when God speaks of man, He brings the loftiness of his pride down to the ground, not in order merely to abase him, but through the abasement to restore him to the right exercise of all his capacities. It is not His desire to crush the will into extinction, although in that will there may have been the very essence of a sinner's rebellion. Rather does He make His people willing in the day of His power (Ps. cx. 3). Neither in regeneration nor by any of the operations of grace is man's nature deforced, nor the rights of his personality violated. In all the process of recovery the Divine Spirit has regard to the integrity of human nature, and to its emerging through the death of the lower into the life of the higher and true self. In short, all worthy self-sacrifice is a stage on the way to self-preservation.

Far be it from us, in maintaining this important truth, to forget the need of humility and of unselfishness. These lie at the very root of the Christian life, and are among its essential virtues. Yet

it may be needful to remind some good people of the other virtue of self-respect. "It is only to human humility that God can speak intelligently. Only when a man is humble can he hear and understand the words of God. . . . But here is another picture with another truth in God's message to Ezekiel, 'Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.' Not on his face, but on his feet; not in the attitude of humiliation, *but in the attitude of self-respect*; not stripped of all strength and lying like a dead man waiting for life to be given to him, but strong in the intelligent consciousness of privilege, and ready to co-operate with the living God who spoke to him,—so he is now to receive the word of God. Was not this a declaration of the truth that man might lose the words of God because of a low and grovelling estimate of himself, as well as because of a conceited one? The best understanding of God would come to man only when man was upright and self-reverent in his privilege as the child of God."[1]

The fact is that many people, when they think of Duty, have a very hazy idea as to whom it is due. They clearly see that it is due to their neighbours; probably most of them feel it is due to God also.

[1] Bishop P. Brooks, *Candle of the Lord.* Sermon on Self-Respect.

But there is a third factor between these; and notwithstanding the universal existence of selfishness, we maintain that the true Self, the Christian personality or Ego, is often forgotten. Have I no duties to this Self? Do they come altogether after the other duties? Or do they not present themselves along with the others and condition them? Yet somehow this duty to one's self has been misunderstood; and the high and lofty idea of self-respect, so much and deservedly belauded by Milton, is not a familiar one in many minds.

It is only when some claim of an unpleasant kind is made against them, or some injury done to their good name, that such people wake up to the fact that they have a duty to themselves; and that he who does not value at its true estimate his own soul, and the personality which God has given him, does not in truth understand the splendour and dignity of his being, nor the image of God which he wears. He forgets the truth that "we are greater than we know," and that in the inestimable possession of an immortal spirit, kindred to God's own nature, every child of man is bound to respect and honour himself. What does the grand poet of Puritanism say? "He who holds himself in reverence and due esteem both for the dignity of God's image upon him and for the price of his redemption, which he thinks to

be visibly marked upon his forehead, accounts himself a fit person to do the noblest and godliest deeds, and much better worth than to defile and deject with such a debasement and pollution as sin is, himself so highly ransomed and ennobled to a new friendship and filial relationship with God. Nor can he fear so much the offence and reproach of others, as he dreads and would blush at the reflection of his own severe and modest eye upon himself, if it should see him doing or imagining that which is sinful, were it even in the deepest secrecy."

"The dignity of God's image upon him!" What an elevating range of truth lies in that thought. It expresses man's peculiar excellence as a rational and moral being. Says the sacred record, with remarkable emphasis, "God made man in His own image, after His likeness." And Ewald remarks how here the "narrative is unusually strong in its joyful exultation, as if the thought could not be expressed with sufficient vivacity." That image is nothing accidental, nor is it merely an ideal after which man is to strive. It is a treasure that he is to keep, and hand down unimpaired to his posterity. The splendour of that image has been dimmed and injured by sin, but it has not been destroyed. There it still is, testifying to its Divine origin and proving itself "des Menschen Königs Diploma."

Has the reader ever entered the room of a photographer and watched the process of developing? How dim at first is the picture! Not a trace of feature is visible. It seems but a blur or blot. Yet slowly, under the chemical process, each separate lineament emerges from the confused obscurity into distinctness, until at length the perfect photograph is produced. The work of the Divine Spirit in the Christian may be well compared to such a process of developing. Sin has dimmed but has not destroyed the *Dei Imago*. God's Spirit is bestowed and life's severe discipline is prescribed for the purpose of effecting this development. As a hot iron, passed over paper, will render legible the invisible ink; so trial, sanctified by grace, to him that walks in the will of God, only brings into clearness the writing of that loving hand that has been tracing there the lineaments of the Lord, and has been making the subject of it an epistle of Christ, known and read of all men. Yet how many, who are in the dark Camera of some season of sorrow, misunderstand God's educative purpose of "developing," and scan His work in vain! They confuse education with punishment; and, like Jacob, they imagine that Divine withholdings are Divine withstandings. They miss all the blessing of chastisement, and fail to see a time of privilege in the hour of affliction. They

forget that chastisement is the family badge and the family privilege, a time of developing, a process in which we should bravely endure and manfully rejoice. Is it not true that the Christian calling is rightly understood only, to use words already quoted, "when a man stands upright and self-reverent in his privilege as the child of God"?

This whole being of ours is the Creator's work; and to say that the duty of self-preservation is a high Christian duty, is only to affirm that what the Creator planned it is ours to build up and to consummate. Our personality is the product of His creative hand; and we may rest assured that He desires the perfection of both its parts and its entirety. He would discredit Himself were He to be content with half-finished work or with frustrated aims. His grace is offered to us, and is sufficient for every possible need. His whole power is pledged to build up believers into a perfect Christian character. If we fail to reach that lofty ideal, let us not lay the blame on Him, nor imagine that He will ever disown or repudiate the task He has undertaken.

Further, the rich provision that has been made for our spiritual life contradicts the idea that God delights in mutilated saints or in any infraction of the Divine image in man. His creative acts in every newborn soul are virtually hostages given for His

fidelity to each generation. We feel the force of the Psalmist's plea—"Thy hands have made and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments." At each step in our spiritual progress we are promised instruction to enable us to walk so as to please God. We may rest assured that He will never repudiate the responsibilities which He has assumed for our moral well-being. He that hath begun the good work in us will continue it. Were that work left to our own unaided effort, we should lose all heart as we saw the goal of excellence retiring from view. But at every stage the Divine Spirit comes to our help, deepening desires for communion, chastening our evil and erratic tendencies, quieting our passions, and so enabling us to recover our self-possession by Himself possessing us more fully.

A man works at his best when he is filled with the Spirit of God. Never did the Apostle Peter preach as he preached on the day of Pentecost. That wonderful enduement did not paralyse his mind, nor even discourage nor overpower him. It evoked his mental and moral energies as they never had been evoked before. That Divine afflatus made him master of himself, so that he was able to use the entire group of his disciplined powers for the doing of God's will. His personality was neither over-

borne nor suppressed. The phenomena of prostration, so manifest in some revivals, did not take place. On the other hand, the apostle's personality reached the height of its usefulness, and had for the first time entire command of its mental, moral, and spiritual resources.

We believe that a man is never so thoroughly and truly himself as when he is under the leading of the Spirit of God. *Never is a preacher so effective as when he is the natural channel of Divine truth*, through which it flows in an unobstructed current, who speaks as he feels, and because he realises that truth in his own experience. It is a fact of deep import and central to a man's success in Christian work, that to have complete control and use of one's self one must be controlled by the Divine Spirit. This is one of the paradoxes of the Christian life. We seem to inherit antagonistic natures; *yet the primal law of life is single-heartedness.* It is when the Spirit has liberated us from the bondage of evil habits that we are free to do God's work in His own way. We need a birth from the natural to the spiritual; but many of us also need another birth, *from the spiritual back into the natural.* Certainly unnatural piety is very unlovely. To possess a natural piety we must seek to have our nature renewed by God's grace; and we must see that the

fruits of the Spirit be naturalised within us. Then shall we be ourselves at our very best, and shall "in our patience gain possession of our souls."

This truth is one that needs to be accentuated to-day. The circumstances of the time justify us in emphasising it. We live in days of *Specialism*, in which the doctrine of the division of labour has been carried to its utmost possible extent. This division of employments has cribbed men and shut them into narrow corners of trade, and has had a deadening effect upon their mental life. There can be little discipline of character in the work of one who devotes his whole time, day after day, to finishing a screw, or heading a nail, or giving a point to a steel pen. It may develop some particular muscle, and it will teach a lesson in patience; but it can do no more. The wearisome round necessarily produces a deteriorating effect on the character, and increases vacancy and lassitude of mind. Besides, where workmen find nothing in their daily avocation to enlist their intelligence or kindle their moral nature, they leave it with a strong predisposition to go after stimulants and other means of indulging passions which are doubly welcome because they break up the dull stagnation of their dreary life. These workmen cannot but feel that they are themselves but as a mere ratchet or pinion in the great machine on which they attend,

and that they have no independent worth of their own. All this necessarily tends to incompleteness of character, to loss of manhood, and to the destruction of the lofty ideal that should broaden and enrich every life. Under this division of labour the ideal will in all probability shrink into a miserable narrowness; and then the man is content to be only the servant of his machine. His ideal will remain; but it is an ideal rather of self-mutilation than of self-conservation. And, in a commercial society like ours, there probably *is no greater danger besetting our working men than this fragmentary conception of their manhood.*

Another aspect of this question must be referred to. From many sides the objection is heard that modern life has injured *the originality* that we have been defending. The tendency of commerce and of education to-day is to eliminate all idiosyncrasies; and in the midst of the socialistic environment of the twentieth century it is becoming increasingly difficult to preserve our independence. What with the vast increase of international communication, and the ease with which one may now visit the continents of the world, national and individual characteristics are being smoothed down, if not obliterated. Also the isolation of large portions of the rural population is a thing of the past. It is now

possible to live in the country and yet to have our daily newspapers, our magazines, our lending libraries, and quickly to pass from country into city so as to listen to the best music and the finest oratory. A century ago, without railroads, post-offices, cheap newspapers, or books, life in the country meant isolation from the great currents of thought and of social feeling. To-day the conditions have changed, and the postman brings to our door all the thought of the world that is worth recording. Even in country districts the tendency to individualism has been greatly curtailed.

The drift of the population citywards has been in favour of a general toning down of all sentiment *to a socialistic level.* The electrical influence of numbers, the inspiration of the crowd, and the solidarity of the masses engaged in trade, have certainly endangered the sacred principle of independence. The individual man naturally takes the colour of his social surroundings, as the African serpent takes the colour of the fallen leaves of its forest, and as the Bengal tiger reproduces the apparent impressions of the reeds of its native jungle, which Nature prints in stripes upon its tawny hide.

In France, the land of conventionality, the very word "original" has come to connote contemptuous disregard of the etiquette of society. "*C'est un*

original" is said of a man whose ideas are not those of the fashionable *beau-monde*, and whom the said *beau-monde* therefore holds in contempt. He may be well-bred and cultured; but if he infringe the conventional opinions that fashion has agreed to regard as peculiarly its own, and the parrot-like repetition of which goes on in every *salon* with wearisome routine, he is branded as an original, and the exercise of his gifts in society is bad taste!

Possibly, also, our great public schools and our national system of education have a tendency to turn out scholars who all know exactly the same things, who are all trained to look at truth in one way, and are all intellectually fashioned on the same models.[1] Here there is clearly a great danger that individuality shall be swamped, and our young people cease to possess any relative independence of character. The more we think of this danger, the more we value the recent extension of liberty granted to students at college in choosing various courses of study for the taking of their degree; and, notwithstanding its own dangers, one can see how this tendency may be counteracted to a certain extent by the Specialism so much encouraged in

[1] Cf. the author's Croall Lectures, *Social Aspects of Christian Morality*, pp. 367, 371.

higher subjects at the universities and in the various branches of modern science.

But at the same time we maintain that culture, so far from annihilating our mental independence, only gives it the means of more fully and clearly expressing itself. We are quite sure that among the thoroughly educated people of to-day, there can be found as much individual independence as could have been met with in the palmy days of the Elizabethan period of literature. One of the first Art critics has said that there is no place in the whole world where the feeling of independence is so complete as it is in London. What struck him as particularly admirable in the literary and artistic circles of the metropolis was, that men of the most various tastes "could profess their opinions and indulge their tastes without inconvenient consequences to themselves, and that hardly any opinion or eccentricity excludes a man from pleasant social intercourse, if he does not make himself intolerable by bad manners" (Hamerton).

If, on the other hand, in many small towns and villages the local public opinion is so despotic that a man cannot preserve his individuality, then it may be his duty to deny himself the pleasure of mixing in society, in order to maintain what is to him of priceless worth. To many Christian people this presents

a problem of great difficulty. Nothing is more stale than the conventional notions retailed night after night in many fashionable circles, where serious thought is altogether avoided, and conversation upon the deep things of life is tabooed as "bad form." Whether he should join it and break through its crust of formalism, or should bear isolation for the preservation of his better self, is a question for a man's conscience, on which he must seek Divine guidance. If he determine on the former course, he will not be without the rich reward that comes to the spirit of self-sacrifice in a noble cause. If on the latter course, he will discover that solitude has its compensations, and that a strong character can be useful and active anywhere.

Whatever his occupation be, he who does his work as unto God and not to man will find such service healthful and bracing to his moral well-being. Surely it is the height of happiness to be fully occupied with a task to which one's powers are equal, and to begin each morning with the feeling that the whole day lies before us for the discharge of our uninterrupted duty. With such happy employment of our faculties we shall not lose our independence if we for a time go into society, nor our happiness if we remain in solitude. The conditions of a true life are met, says Emerson, "if we keep our inde-

pendence yet do not lose our sympathy. We require such a solitude as shall hold us to its revelations when we are in the street and in palaces. Yet it is not the circumstance of seeing more or fewer people, but the readiness of sympathy, that is important. And a sound mind will derive its principles from insight, and will accept society as the natural element in which they are to be applied."

The inculcation of this duty of Self-Preservation is greatly needed for another reason. The democratic tendency of our time is working against the survival of individuality and diversity. The onward progress of society seems to be entirely in favour of uniformity. Democracy is intolerant of exceptions, and seeks to mould all men after one pattern. It is careful to recognise the great truth that all have worth, worth that effectually distinguishes and separates the man from the test which he uses. It has rightly given emphasis to that doctrine of equality which expresses a truth of the very highest import, and one which religion has ever enforced. Before God all men are equal: the day drudge and the peer, the slave and the master. Whether a lazar in his rags, or a prodigal feeding among the swine, yet man has in him a principle of moral and spiritual life that is the ultimate test of value and the touchstone of essential worth. It entitles every man to respect

and courtesy, to civil and political rights, so that he may have an opportunity to make a true man of himself and develop his character along the lines of his individuality.

But even civil rights do not mean that all of us have rights to equal things. Nor can even the most ultra-democrat mean that men are equal in brain power, in manual dexterity, or in general capacity and energy. In all democratic countries, inequalities of skill, force, and ability very readily manifest themselves. "The equality of man" is a doctrine that must coexist with many inequalities and superiorities of mental and physical endowment. And it is well it should be so. Let us maintain that all men alike have moral worth, however unequal in other respects. But let us gladly recognise individual diversity, and maintain that each man is entitled to a sphere of work in which he shall have room to develop his talents and to be himself. But it is not easy to maintain this ground against the march of uniformity resulting from the democratic tendencies of the twentieth century.

We may sum up the teaching of this chapter in a few words.

Negatively; we must not be mere copies of another. In imitation we always are disposed to admire some

exaggerated virtue rather than the best qualities of our model.

Positively; we must be true to ourselves and to our individual endowments. It is in this line that success will most probably attend our efforts.

We must know our worth, and cultivate the noble Christian virtue of self-respect. This is quite consistent with the grace of humility. We may silently believe in the possibilities of the powers that God has given us, and at the same time keep a critical eye on our actual performances and shortcomings. If honest, we shall always have a deep consciousness of our imperfections, and will to the end feel that we are unprofitable servants. There is, indeed, a type of religious humility that is content to speak of itself always as a "miserable sinner," devoid of all power of goodness. But confidence in a man's self is nothing more than the complemental virtue of humility; and it should not be omitted from the Christian scheme of virtues. Practically it is identical with the Christian virtue of faith in God, by whose gracious help our personal effort is enabled to surpass its own efficiency. The same truth may be expressed in terms of ethics when we say that a man should have faith in his renewed self, as we state in terms of the religious consciousness when we bid him lay hold of the strength of God.

The latter mode of stating the fact will always appeal to the man who has known the ensnaring power of sin, and is deeply convinced of his moral weakness in the presence of temptation. But to others it may not so appear. And the truth can afford to be stated in both ethical and religious terms.

Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

—TENNYSON.

We are but organs mute, till a Master touches the keys;
Verily vessels of earth, into which God poureth the wine;
Harps are we, silent harps, that have hung in the willow trees,
Dumb till our heartstrings swell and break with a pulse divine."

—F. MYERS.

Blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.—ST. PAUL.

The world sits at the feet of Christ,
Unknowing, blind, and unconsoled;
It shall yet touch His garment's fold,
And feel the Heavenly Alchemist
Transmute its very dust to gold.

God cannot make man's best
Without best men to help Him.

Ein edler Sklave in dir ist
Dem du Freiheit schuldig bist.

CHAPTER XI

The Christian Culture of Self, or Self-Development

We have, in the previous chapters, been looking at the first great necessity of the moral and spiritual life, the subjection of the powers and sensibilities to reason and conscience. This is the negative side of the duty of self-discipline. Its end is not to eradicate any faculty or annihilate a single part of our constitution, but only to prune hurtful growths, and to make all our faculties and talents tributary to the one great end, the formation of Christian character. A chaotic life unorganised and at the beck of every stray desire, would be a life of uselessness and of unhappiness. The sentient, impulsive self must be disciplined and brought under the control of a Christian conscience. The senses must learn to obey and must cease to govern. If the true self, the proper personality, is to be in vigorous health, the egoistic self must be slain. We must "die to live."

But the Christian man whose life is one of continual repression, will not attain to the beauty and rounded completeness of Christian character. The good man reaches after something more than negative virtue. He aims at the full freedom of faith and love. He desires to embody in his personality positive graces. The expulsive power of a new affection is his, for he is not under the law, but under grace. Christian character is not a strait-jacket, only to restrain from wrong-doing; it is reached through the free development of all our God-given faculties. *The life of repression is the life of Judaism, unlovely, restrained.* The life of freedom is the Christian life. It breathes the mountain air of communion. It speaks of the large liberty of love. It lives and moves in God. It delights to do His will, and desires to be evermore possessed with His Spirit.

A religion of bondage always tends to the exaltation of self. It never can eradicate the vice of egoism. It naturally binds and fosters it. It is what *I* do: it is *my* efforts, *my* prayers, *my* watchings, *my* tithing of mint and anise and cumin, *my* givings of all I possess. To such a man God is debtor. The Pharisee felt that by his gifts he had put the Deity under obligation to him. But a religion of love and liberty leaves nothing to boast of.

It knows only what Christ has done for us and in us, knows what He is, and how wonderfully He cures, and keeps, and delivers. There is nothing here to feed our egoism. Love lays all its trophies at the feet of its Lord, consecrates to Him time and talents and all. It is the virtue that develops all other virtues. It is God within us working out His will, and giving us the only right development of our self along the lines of true progress, and on the principles of Christian liberty.

In speaking of the culture of self, we need scarcely say that we use the word in the widest sense. *It is the culture of the whole man*, of the total self, the harmonious development of every faculty in right proportion, and with due regard to usefulness and worth.[1] We have already said that the duty of self-control may require that some part, some appetite, or temperamental characteristic, may have to die that the man may live. In so far as one, through evil indulgence and bad habits, has permitted some part of his nature to gain such ascendancy that spiritual surgery ("cut it off; pluck it out") is necessary, in so far he comes short of being able to consecrate his totality to God.

[1] Cf. Professor Peabody, *Religion of an Educated Man*, ch. ii.; also Nettleship's essay, *The Theory of Education in Plato's Republic.*

This culture of the whole man is at present disregarded by some who affirm that we *must specialise* in our education. No doubt in some departments of work Specialism is necessary, but we must carefully shun the dangers attaching to the specialist's life. Men cultivate one faculty to needle-point alertness, and then think themselves wonderfully clever. But see how one-sided they are! They have concentrated their whole attention on one subject. They have taught themselves to do one thing neatly, skilfully, but they have ignored the other sides of their being until these are virtually atrophied. Darwin's confession on this point is pathetically striking. He had, he says, so trained his mind to collect scientific data and deduce laws from them, that he had lost all sense of the beauty of poetry, and could not enjoy Shakespeare or a painting.

There is no want either, in these days, of prophets of culture, who, so far from forgetting their duty to self, have gone to the other extreme, and made self-culture not a means, but an end of life. The letters of Goethe give many proofs of this. There is about his training of himself an atmosphere of self-consciousness, a perpetual self-reference in all his experience of trial and discipline, as if he were saying, "How shall this affect me?" This is a species of self-consciousness which is not healthy,

far less Christian. We would rather see a man forget himself in the service of others, and even neglect culture, than exhibit this perpetual backward reference as to how self is getting on under it all. There is a real growth of character, a true self-development, which takes place either unconsciously or subconsciously without special attention being directed to it. Such a direct concentration of mind on self as Goethe was guilty of is but a perverted form of self-love, which absorbs in self-seeking the true moral discipline. Christian self-love has many counterfeit presentments, and this is one of them. But what we must ever regard as deserving of our utmost attention is that renewed self which is the product of the regenerating Spirit of Jesus Christ.

It will be seen that such culture of one's true self is a means to a worthy end. Its purpose is to render us more fit for the service both of God and man. In order to be good and to do good, we must see to it that we are true to ourselves and are ourselves. A Christian man is not conscious of any inconsistency between the altruistic and egoistic elements within him. The apparent egoism is really the ground of the altruism.

The right culture of self embraces all that is ethical; it covers the exercise of talent, the enlargement of the horizon of duty beyond narrow individual

interests, and the recognition of the supreme worth of personality; while it develops our inmost nature from all one-sidedness into a healthy all-round completeness.[1] At the same time, such culture will lead to a fine independence, to that feeling of self-respect so finely set forth in Milton's glowing words. Such feeling is opposed to all servility (Jas. ii. 3). It asserts the integrity of self; it escapes the fear of man, and shuns all idolatry of rank, or wealth, or intellectual power. It aims at making the whole man a fit instrument for the service of humanity, and at clothing him with meetness for the Master's use.

Physical Culture

The care of the body has a very intimate connection with our moral well-being. But the relation has often been misunderstood. The body is the servant of the spirit, and the servant must never be allowed to become the master. Therefore our attention to health is only a part of our attention to virtuous well-being. A healthy body is a means to a healthy moral life, but it is no part of that life. The man who makes his physical well-being his constant care, converts the means of healthful living into the end of life, and an indirect into a direct obliga-

[1] Dorner, *Christian Ethics*, p. 482.

tion. We must avoid two extremes, that of the ascetic, who ignores the due claims of the body, and that of the athlete, who cares more for the animal than for the spiritual nature. To despise the body is sinful, for it has been redeemed by Christ. To think more of the body than of the spirit is to reverse the moral order, and forget the proportions of the Christian life.

Our duty is, regarding the body as the instrument of the spirit, to seek perfect bodily health, and conscientiously avoid whatever excess would destroy or injure it. Life is good, though not the highest good, since sometimes it has to be yielded for the sake of truth and righteousness. To preserve our life and make the most of it for God, we must train the body by healthy exercise, and make it capable of enduring labour and hardships. This is a moral duty from which we cannot escape, and it materially contributes to the upbuilding of character. The care and culture of our physical well-being constitute for all of us a religious duty.

1. To begin with that which is most fundamental, consider how important it is that all those hereditary impulses to action which we speak of as instincts should be in a healthy condition.[1] It is here in the animal nature that the first germs of conduct are

[1] Cf. Sully, *Handbook of Psychology*, ch. iii.

discovered. Even in the case of the lower animals there are found instinctive impulses urging them on to the accomplishment of ends of which they are themselves unaware; and it is still more true in the case of man. How much may be ascribed to heredity and to congenital aptitude is an undecided question.[1] But there can be no doubt that these instincts affect large tracts of human experience, and offer great opportunities to the wise teacher and the parent in the education of the young.

The force of instinct is stronger than the stimulus of pain or of pleasure. It liberates such a discharge of energy as will overcome what would otherwise be insuperable difficulties. It never waits to consider consequences; but with invincible eagerness it pursues its object from the overmastering desire to satisfy its own inherent energy. Neither pleasure nor pain can divert it from the accomplishment of its predestined ends. Even in the autumn of life, when young blood has cooled and pleasures have begun to pall, that instinctive craving after some form of sport or scientific pursuit which men call a hobby will refuse to be thwarted by either the counsels of wisdom or by the teachings of experience.

How wise it is, then, to lay hold of this power and press it into the formation of character. "Young

[1] Darwin, *Descent of Man*, 2nd edition, pp. 103, 104.

blood will have its course"; the instinctive ardour of youth cannot be held in with the bit of prudence or the bridle of foresight. Its forces must find an outlet; and it should be the aim of all who influence the young to direct this vast store of healthy proclivities into right channels. We may rest assured that virtue can find no such stable foundation as when instinct combines with wisdom to build the basement. It should be our aim to feed and to foster all these forward-struggling tendencies, to rally them in favour of what is good, and to secure their powerful aid in the formation of habit and in the upbuilding of character.[1]

Especially helpful should these instinctive propulsions be found in the consolidation of good habits. Psychologists have pointed out the intimate connection between the two, and have shown how fatal may be the consequence of neglecting to buy up the opportunity, and transform the instinctive energy into a moral habit. All vigorous children delight in the exercise of their involuntary activity. Their self-will is often but a form of this energy, which the parent or nurse determines to repress. Such children may be very troublesome; they may be embittered by unsympathetic repression, or else they may be allowed by fond parents to grow up into a wild

[1] Cf. Guyau, *Education and Heredity*, p. 24.

self-willed egoism. But the duty of the teacher is plain. Instead of curbing the stubborn will and repressing the instinctive impulsion to activity, he should yoke this energy to the car of moral progress. Let him provide a proper outlet for it, and direct the boy's interest in some sphere into which he shall gain a skilful habit, or acquire a knowledge of some useful art.

There comes a moment in all young lives when instincts ripen; and if that moment is not seized and a corresponding acquisition made, they pine away. No writer has better illustrated the inhibition of instincts by habits and their transitoriness than Professor W. James in his *Psychology*. He says that one result of this law of transitoriness is that "if, during the time of such an instinct's vivacity, objects adequate to arouse it are met with, a *habit* of acting on them is formed, which remains when the original instinct has passed away; but that if no such objects are met with, then no habit will be formed; and later on in life, when the animal meets the objects, he will altogether fail to react, as at the earlier epoch he would instinctively have done." "There is a happy moment for fixing skill in drawing, for making boys collectors in natural history, and presently dissectors and botanists; then for initiating them into the harmonies of mechanics and

the wonders of physical and chemical law. Later, introspective psychology and the metaphysical and religious mysteries take their turn; and, last of all, the drama of human affairs and worldly wisdom in the widest sense of the term. In each of us a *saturation-point* is soon reached in all these things; the impetus of our purely intellectual zeal expires, and unless the topic be one associated with some urgent personal need, that keeps our wits constantly whetted about it, we settle into an equilibrium, and live on what we learned when our interest was fresh and instinctive, without adding to the store. Outside of their own business, the ideas gained by men before they are twenty-five are practically the only ideas they shall have in their lives. They *cannot* get anything new. Disinterested curiosity is past, the mental grooves and channels set, the power of assimilation gone. If by chance we ever do learn anything about some entirely new topic, we are afflicted with a strange sense of insecurity, and we fear to advance a resolute opinion. But with things learned in the plastic days of instinctive curiosity we never lose entirely our sense of being at home."

It is clear, then, that if instincts are neglected or starved, nature's punishment follows in a thwarted youth or an impoverished manhood. Healthy ambition dies if kept fasting too long; *curiosity is*

atrophied when not encouraged. The instinct for acquisition has its *natal, its auspicious hour.* If the star be allowed to pass its meridian, the favourable hour has culminated, and henceforward the man has to live upon what he has already learned. Dante puts the key of the arch at the age of thirty-five; Augustine and Lord Brougham have affirmed that the age of thirty is the height of the tide, "which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." Let that time pass, *the power of assimilation goes*, and the sad spectacle is witnessed of men endeavouring to make acquirements for which the favourable time had long vanished. It is the part of wisdom to seize the momentary interest and appropriate it for the formation of a valuable habit, or the acquirement of some useful art. For *in youth we forge and prepare;* but *in maturer years we only temper and anneal.* The molten metal of early years can be easily run into a mould and permanently shaped; but once youth's ardent enthusiasm has gone, manhood simply remains in the shape it has assumed, and stands by the customs and maxims adopted in earlier days. In instinct by itself we cannot put our trust; its transitoriness makes it a worthless foundation. But when instinct is converted into habit, it becomes a valuable aid in the development of character.

2. Consider also how closely physical health is re-

lated to morality. Health underlies every part of our moral constitution. A man who inhabits a diseased body cannot *think* healthily, and consequently cannot *act* judiciously. It would surprise many of us to discover how many errors that have injured our business and damaged our good name, have had their origin in indigestion. It is very humbling, yet very true, that the action of the mind hangs upon the condition of the stomach. And the reaction of bodily ailments on our moral nature is very powerful and speedy. Nervous malady quickly produces cerebral disease. Prolonged sleeplessness will soon create hypochondria, and give a bias to one's whole outlook on life. A healthy mind has very intimate relations to a healthy body. *Health is therefore a handmaid to character.* No kind of education is more valuable than that which instructs us in the right conditions of a healthy life, and helps to form those habits which are most favourable to it.

3. There is an intimate connection *between health and success* in one's calling. A man that in these days of the express speed of trade wishes to rise in his profession, must possess that large store of energy and endurance which is found in connection only with a vigorous constitution. Those who have risen to be merchant princes are usually possessed of tough fibre and great physical vitality. It is so in

literature not less than in commerce. We do occasionally find men of lofty genius, who, with a sickly and infirm constitution, have yet moved the world with their powerful minds. But for one who has done it, we could name a dozen who have, on the other hand, owed their mental vigour largely to a superb physical energy. The biographies of Luther, of Goethe, of Shakespeare, and of Gladstone, show us what a valuable gift they inherited in their fine constitutions, and how careful they were to preserve that endowment. To the mind a healthy body will lend *the necessary energy for creating and shaping its ideals.* To the will it gives the tone and the elasticity which enable it to cope with difficulties. Even in old age, the time of involution, it will impart a vigour of thought and a continuous freshness which are in fine contrast with the languid peevishness of the aged epicure and the selfish life of the broken-down reprobate. In saying this, we do not maintain that physical health and temperament are the ground of any natural virtues. But they furnish a favourable starting-point for moral culture, and they tend to stamp our character by their after effects in such a way that no wise man will overlook their great importance in relation to conduct.[1]

[1] Cf. Dorner's *Christian Ethics*, § 3.

A good constitution, full of vigour and ardour, is of inestimable help to its owner in the conduct of life. When consecrated to God's service, it becomes *a valuable instrument in Christian work.* The onward march of human progress and the expansion of the kingdom of God are greatly helped by Christian men of this mould. They form the host of progress, "the willing army in the day of Thy power," the dew of whose un-ageing youth makes "the flower of the army of God." (Ps. cx. 3, R.V.). While, on the other hand, men of languid temperament and weak constitution are apt to fall into pessimistic moods which naturally result in a weak will and a stunted moral character. A hypochondriac is always a hopeless man who lives on the sunless side of the street, and whose despondency both distorts his judgment and weakens his resolution. Indeed, it is difficult to maintain a clear judgment and an honest mind when the spirit inhabits an unhealthy body. And of all the injuries a man sustains from a shattered constitution, we know of none more to be deplored than the irresolute, feeble will, and the perverted or treacherous judgment. The *mens sana in corpore sano* will greatly contribute to the formation of a correct judgment and a sensible view of life, qualities that are indispensable to worthy conduct and to successful work.

4. We are far from denying that corporeal weakness may be a form of trial through which Christian faith and courage may shine all the finer from their foil. The shattered nerves of many a saint have furnished an opportunity for the bright display of the wonderfully compensating grace of God. But this does not weaken, but rather only illustrates, the force of our contention, that if a man is to become all that he has in him to be he will reach the highest possibilities of his moral being only when his sound mind inhabits a sound body. A Christian man should therefore overlook nothing that can contribute to his physical and moral well-being. He should know his own constitution, and spare no effort to maintain himself in a condition of perfect health.

"Moderation and self-restraint in all things—an abundance of exercise, of fresh air, and of cold water; a sufficiency of steady work not carried to excess; occasional change of habits and abstinence from a few things which are manifestly injurious to health, are the cardinal rules to be observed" (Lecky, *The Map of Life*, p. 16).

As a general rule, if of sedentary occupation, one should take light food, and in less quantity than if his business calls him to a life of open-air exercise. Probably when he gets above forty a more simple diet will be found advisable. To the

young and the active, on the other hand, animal meat and food in large quantities are requisite for health.

A variety of food, too, is beneficial. Providence has given us a marvellous abundance of food, animal and vegetable, and has aimed at gratifying our tastes no less than satisfying our hunger. Everything that is proved by experience to be probably hurtful should be resolutely eschewed. We know some people who have not had the wisdom to give up certain foods and drinks injurious to them because of the self-denial it involved. Surely religion should enter into our eating and drinking, and all that is hurtful ought to be abjured.

But food cannot be considered apart from other essentials to health. There should be abundance of exercise, and of fresh air. The cold water bath, where it can be safely used, may not be neglected. There should be healthful and refreshing recreation for body and mind. Many a moody Christian needs to attend to the counsel of the poet—

> "Go forth into the light of things;
> Let Nature be your teacher."

The unobtrusive influences of field and forest, of the mountain-side and the seashore, pass imperceptibly into the soul. They deepen and cleanse the life of feeling; they quicken the springs of vitality; they

help to lift off the dead weights of habit; and more especially do they carry those who are much shut up in business, or are city-pent, far away from the fever and fret of the unprofitable world, and give them more sobering and healthful views of life. All this is helpful to character. Continuous preoccupation of the mind with the worries of business or the fashions of society is not the best way to understand either commerce or our fellow-creatures. We understand life better when we can, for a time at least, stand outside of these, and, surrendering ourselves to the calming influences of flower and field, share in the simpler and more primitive life of the country. In these days, when the world is too much with us and we spend our powers so lavishly in working at high pressure, more and more is it necessary to cultivate the love of nature, and, as Mrs. Browning says—

> "Let out-door sights
> Sweep gradual gospels in."

5. A superficial estimate of earthly well-being might lead us to imagine that the Christian religion, with its lofty spiritual aims, would *despise the body*. And in some phases of its development it has done so. The Neoplatonists regarded the corporeal being as unworthy of its redeemed and sanctified tenant, deeming it as fettered to the soul as is an oyster

to its shell. Plotinus would not have his picture painted, lest posterity should think he put value on what he contemned.

Had he gone to the Bible instead of going to the *Republic* and the *Phædo* of Plato, he would have learned that man is made in God's image, that at the root of all Christ's redemption work lies the conception of the individual's worth. By the doctrines of the Incarnation and of the Resurrection, Christianity accentuates the importance of the body, affirming that "the body of our humiliation shall be fashioned anew, and conformed to the body of His glory." The mission of the Master included the provision of supplies to meet men's physical needs. All abuse and profanation of the body is forbidden in St. Paul's Epistles, on the ground that the body has become *a temple* of the Holy Ghost—a portion cut off (τέμνω, like the heathen temple site), and separated unto its holy guest. How zealous, then, should we be to keep swept and cleansed the house that holds such a guest!

May we not go further in this direction, and expect that to every believer there will be given an actual impartation of Divine strength that will help to recruit his wasted energies? The body participates in the redemption of Christ. It is part

of the living sacrifice we lay on His altar and dedicate to His service. "Spirit, soul, and body" are to be sanctified and preserved unto His coming. Is it unreasonable to expect that the spiritual grace will have a beneficial influence on the physical no less than on the moral nature? Contrast a drunkard filled with the burning craving for alcohol, and the same man "clothed, and in his right mind," and filled with the Spirit of God. It is true that the law of the fleshly harvest may still hold, and he may reap as he sowed in the body. *But does not grace tend to health?* May we not expect that in many constitutions a manifestation of God's love will be accompanied by an accession of physical vigour? We know how great is the power of spirit over body, and how vastly that power is enhanced when the soul is moved by some mighty impulse.

The conditions that accompany spiritual well-being—the elevated calm, the peace of conscience, the freedom from care that the Divine Spirit brings; all these are creative of vital energy, and *increase the possibilities of effective service.* There is ground for cherishing the assurance that for every God-given work there will be added God-given strength. The inward force of regeneration is the beginning of that *climactic miracle,* which shall one day sum up all other means of healing power, when sickness

and sorrow shall for ever be swept away. The virtue which now radiates from the ascended Christ is shared by every disciple living in touch with his Lord. When love is ardent and the spiritual pulse-beat is strong, there are present the conditions in which Divine skill can successfully operate, and the *vis medicatrix naturæ* can come to our aid. In bringing souls to Jesus Christ, we are working for the physical no less than for the moral well-being of society.

The mind that is filled with pure thoughts of God will be in little danger of falling a prey to imaginary troubles. A full surrender to Christ brings a rest to the heart and buoyancy to the spirit, that go farther to promote vigorous health than all the resources of the pharmacopœia. Very directly does *Christian character react on health* no less than health reacts on character.

It is therefore a matter of vital importance and of high ethical value that we should acquire in youth the knowledge and the habits that lead to a healthy life. Those who acquire them may, through some misfortune or inherited disease, be doomed to weak vitality or early death. But they at least immensely increase the probability of enjoying a long and useful life. They will probably escape the second childhood of the valetudinarian,

and they will not disgrace their Christian name by giving way to the inertia and the depression of the pessimist. Further, for their encouragement, let them not forget that the will has a wonderfully direct influence over the body. A will, set on keeping God's commandments and working along the lines of His leading, very soon drives away nervous depression and ensures a useful and happy life.

I do not think that I can better sum up the teaching of this chapter than by quoting the well-known words of Professor Huxley's essay. He says that the disciplined man is one "who has been so trained in youth that his *body* is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that, as a mechanism, it is capable of: whose *intellect* is a clear, cold, logic-engine, with all its parts of equal strength, and in smooth working order; ready, like a steam-engine, to be turned to any kind of work; . . . whose *mind* is stored with a knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of Nature and of the law of her operations; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but *whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience;* who has learned to love all beauty, whether of nature or of art, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself."

CULTURE OF THE MIND

There is a mental just as much as a bodily hygiene.—HÖFFDING.

Es ist immer gut etwas zu wissen.—GOETHE.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of Reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,
But vaster. —TENNYSON.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.
—WORDSWORTH.

There is a faculty or power which we call cleverness, the power of hitting upon and carrying out the means which tend to any proposed end. If, then, the end be noble, the power merits praise: but if the end be base, the power is the power of the villain. So we apply the term "clever" both to the prudent man and to the villain.—ARISTOTLE.

CHAPTER XII

Culture of the Mind

In treating of Self-Culture we necessarily begin with Mental Culture. The Culture of the intellect is very closely connected with Character. The mind is capable of initiating and carrying through processes that produce important results on our life. It is of the highest importance, therefore, to have a well-trained and disciplined mind.

1. Every one knows how an educated man has *a hundred avenues of enjoyment and refinement* that are shut to the ignoramus. Temptations which overpower the uneducated street Arab scarcely touch the educated child of a cultured home. It is the empty mind, the house bereft of its tenant, into which the demon comes with his attendant train and makes his abode. If there is no garrison of lofty spiritual thought to defend the threshold, he will soon beckon to himself seven others still more wicked, who will enter in and take possession.

That is Christ's picture of the Empty Mind, which has a very searching application for all of us.

Many of the sins of the young *spring from the lack of intellectual resource.* The youth has no fine mental tastes; he is idle, unoccupied, a penny-a-day drudge, who mechanically does his work, and is without any intellectual or moral aim. In a world full of contests and heroisms, where many important movements loudly call for help, he is partaker of no political passion, hears no imperative call to the service of his king or of his country. For him, art has no charms, science no absorbing interest, and his mind never grasps the measureless opportunities which daily present themselves, of rising to a life of devoted usefulness. When the evil spirit knocks at the door of such an empty mind, he finds easy admission and a fitting abode.

On the other hand, the youth who is full of intellectual resource is *already garrisoned* against the stealthy approach of vice. Just in so far as he cultivates the mind does he *pro tanto* tend to starve the passions. When Ulysses filled the ears of his sailors with wax, the seductive song of the sirens did not reach them. The young man who seeks his admission to the guild of literature is deaf to the attraction of grosser pleasures. The great naturalist Agassiz, when offered a large sum of money to attend

to the development of a new patent, said he had no time to devote to money-making, so much in love was he with science. In the pursuit of lofty intellectual studies the fires of the lower passions almost go out for want of fuel. Wisely did Tennyson give the counsel—

> ". . . Arise and fly
> The reeling faun, the sensual feast;
> Move upward, working out the beast,
> And let the ape and tiger die."

The young man who spends his hard-won earnings in purchasing his *In Memoriam*, his *Paradise Lost*, his *Horace*, or his *Iliad*, will find not only a new refinement to his mind, but a power that will quicken his moral nature and lift his soul above all sordid aims. Literature has a lofty mission to business men; it liberates them from the materialising of secular things; it teaches grace of expression; it helps the mind to soar above the secularities of trade; it widens out the great horizons of life, thought, and duty, and thereby becomes a valuable handmaid to religion.

2. In the acquisition of knowledge nothing is more important than *the power of controlling our thoughts*. It is no easy matter to keep our mind from straying away from the subject before it. If left to themselves, our ideas will follow each other

according to the law of association, resulting in a strange jungle of connections. One image will drag another into consciousness without any interference on our part, and the mind will make transitions between subjects as wide asunder as the poles. No progress in intellectual acquisition can be made until we learn to inhibit all extraneous matter and confine the mind within one logical line of thought. We must resist the constant tendency to wander from the central idea, and concentrate the attention on those concepts which are directly suggested by and are logically related to that central thought. Flowery fields, full of interesting exploration, lie on every side. But the way of progress is straight and narrow, hedged in like some turnpike; yet its very restrictions are the conditions of all advancement.

A boy sits down to write an essay, we shall say, on steam. He tries to visualise the steam-engine, and very soon a number of concrete pictures start up before his mind, most of which tend to make his thoughts wander away to railways, steamships, or to distant cities where these may once have carried him. The real subject soon slips out of *the focus of attention*, just as the bit of crystal that I want to examine slips out of the focus of my microscope; and that which ought to be occupying

his mind is forgot amid a mass of new images hovering about in the marginal field. If his desire to finish his essay and master the subject be strong, he will divert his attention from those images and concentrate it on the engine and its component parts. The control of his thoughts will depend on whether he has interest enough in the same group of ideas to retain only those before the mind's eye, and to banish all others that compete for attention. He must analyse the complex notion of "engine," consider its parts and their relations to one another, and carefully mark all that is necessarily involved in the idea or that may be deduced from it. Grasping thus the involution and the evolution, the quality, quantity, and all the relations of the engine, he will banish all else from the focus of attention until he has accomplished his task. This is the only way to master the mind, and make it our obedient servant. *Attention really is gained by resolute inattention.*

It is true that it is impossible to fix the mind long on a topic unless the object *develops* and manifests new and interesting relations. It is in this way that the natural tendency of the mind to wander is counteracted. The new connections with other subjects of interest that burst upon the view help to sustain the attention and rivet it afresh

upon the given topic. The rule that all psychologists here agree in laying down is that of Helmholtz: "If we wish to keep the attention fixed upon one and the same object, we must seek constantly *to find out something new about the latter*, especially if other powerful impressions are attracting us away."

Such mental effort brings its own reward. No one can give his attention for any length of time to a subject without discovering how many are the rational bonds that unite it to kindred topics. It kindles in his mind; it awakens new ideas; and forms a strongly connected series of thoughts which by their novelty create the power of sustained attention. We are told that in the experience of Pascal and of Robert Hall, these associated ideas so absorbed their mind as for a time to banish acute bodily pain. In such men of genius, doubtless, every topic fructifies and branches out into innumerable relations. A fertile mind like that of Coleridge is easily held in fixed attention, because *it so quickly discovers fresh and original relations*. That is the essential note of genius. Only it must be noticed that it is not attention that creates the genius: *it is genius which begets attention*. Probably therefore, as Professor James says in his *Psychology*, "genius

rather tends to prevent a man from acquiring habits of voluntary attention, while moderate intellectual endowments are the soil in which we may best expect the virtues of the will, strictly so called, to thrive."

Whether a man be possessed of genius or not, he will never gain self-government until he acquire control of his thoughts. He must scrutinise his mental habits; he must learn to focus his attention upon the subject before him, and to make the intellect his willing and ready servant. This power of mastering the mind is very closely related to strength of character. It is necessary to the forming of correct judgments; and, without it, a man will not be able to reach that mental elevation whence he can distinguish truth from error and reality from semblance.

3. The control of our thoughts will contribute in a material degree to our intellectual progress. It will create habits of observation, by which we acquire knowledge from all that is passing around us. By means of continuous attention we come to discover the wide relations of the facts of science as well as the conclusions or principles which they are calculated to yield. The habit of reflection upon the inter-relations of events is a most valuable one, since in this way we discover the manner in

which historical data are correlated, and associate these with the principles or opinions which they may confirm or overthrow. For the forming of our character it is very helpful to trace in individual and social life the relation of cause and effect, and to deduce from these facts general conclusions for our own guidance.

It is the mark of a truly philosophic mind to arrange facts in their due order, *to generalise and reflect upon them*, so that from their relations fresh truths shall be discovered and new principles of conduct evolved. This condition of mind is more especially needful to the *inventive genius*. In the experimental sciences it has led to all the important discoveries that have so materially contributed to the progress of learning and the welfare of mankind. The young pupil should be encouraged continually to observe and to experiment. In every walk along the road his eyes should be open to watch the flora of the district, to notice the geological features of the soil, to note the beauties of the landscape. A holiday should give him the opportunity of learning something of the people and the traditions of the district. Sir Walter Scott affirmed that he never sat for an hour beside the driver of a coach but he found out what was useful to him of folk-lore or of family histories.

This is the only method in which we may make all life educative, and every highway a school of instruction. We discover

> "books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

It is here that the pupil will find the great benefit of an acquaintance with the positive sciences, which cultivate the faculty of observation, and require that we be true to detail. They aid intellectual culture by insisting on exactitude, correctness, and truthfulness. And the very bulwark of truth in education is the banishment of all guesswork and the cultivation of the scientific habit of mind.

Here, too, the culture that comes from Nature may be emphasised. Wordsworth seldom read any book except the open volume of landscape and sky. He tells us that he learned to look even at his fellow-men "through objects that were great or fair." For he was persuaded that by thus first contemplating life "on the golden side of the shield" he would get a truer and more sympathetic view of mankind. All the great poets have believed with Tennyson that Nature

> "half reveals
> And half conceals the soul within."

Such a half revelation may be a very suggestive one. For in all natural manifestations there is a

certain revelation of ideas, and therefore a revelation of the Author of Nature in whom all ideas are immanent. It is true that such suggestions come to us mainly *through the emotions that Nature excites.* Yet he that has felt the calm peace that broods over the evening lake, or the gladsome feeling that comes with "the roseate hues of early dawn," or the thoughts of life's end that grow out of a calm sunset, knows that there lies in Nature a vast storehouse of imagery out of which are created vivid ideas that are powerful to elevate the mind and to mould the moral character. We believe that the child who begins life amid the sweet simplicities of the country has a great advantage over the city-bred youth. He is face to face with the simple elemental life of the farm and the cottage. Instinctively he takes an interest in the flowers, the birds, and the home quadrupeds that he is ever seeing. They create an interest that wakens up his mind, and may be fostered into a lifelong study, which will enhance the pleasures and direct the recreations of his old age.

4. But intellectual culture is something larger and wider than the control of our thoughts and the observation of Nature. The acquirement of knowledge might only be an exercise of memory; the control of the thoughts might do little more

than give us the power of attention enough to overcome mental distraction. In addition to this, for the purpose of forming character, we must cultivate the reason and learn to pass correct judgments on men and on measures. A properly regulated mind will preserve us from many errors *in the formation of our judgments.* It will deliver us from that servility of mind which makes a man the slave of mere authority, because he is afraid to form opinions for himself by personal investigation. It will save us from that reckless affectation of mental independence that despises authority and hankers after singularity. It will banish vacuity of mind, and teach a man to reach his convictions by a process of reasoning that commends itself to his own mind. He will be no mere echo of others, not because he decries authority, but because he has industriously examined the steps by which he has arrived at his conclusions and found them logically correlated.

It is impossible for a man whose opinions are reached by a second-hand process, and not by a course of honest reasoning, to attain to firm convictions. His judgments are *mere haphazard opinions.* They do not flow from premisses. They are not based on a chain of evidence. The fancies that percolate through his mind have no logical

nexus, and can no more compose a train of reasoning than a number of separate beads can form a necklace. How very weak and uncertain must be the decision that is formed upon the narrow base of the last idea that happens to come into the mind. In such a case one's decisions may be said to be accidentally determined rather than rationally formed. From a crude undigested assemblage of ideas it is impossible to come to any wise or certain conclusion. If a man does not understand the premisses on which his reasoning is grounded, he cannot see whence the principle which determines his conduct derives its authority; his convictions will go through as many changes as the moon itself, and will prove treacherous and evanescent when put to the test.

In order to overcome this danger, it may be well to remember Plato's counsel to the young scholar, to submit himself to a course of mathematical training, in which his powers of reasoning cannot fail to be exercised and braced. *The rigorous methods of filiation and proof*, the precision and logical sequence that characterise all branches of mathematics, will furnish an excellent mental gymnastic. Descartes and Leibnitz were among the greatest mathematicians of their age. Their discoveries changed the face of science; and they

no less influenced the development of modern philosophy. Pascal was a splendid geometrician; and by means of science he perfected those reasoning powers that afterwards developed such great vigour and originality. Nor should the study of Logic be ignored: every thinker should surely be conversant with the Laws of Thought. All thought is a comparison, a recognition of similarity or difference, a synthesis or analysis of terms and of propositions; and he who desires to reach correct judgments and to reason legitimately should learn to distinguish clearly *between the matter and the form of thought*, that he may escape fallacious conclusions and purge his mind of all those errors which create the perplexities of an inconsequent thinker. It was in this sense that the Schoolmen well styled Logic the medicine of the mind.

While we recognise the great value of Inductive Logic, we regret the gradual disuse of the old syllogistic methods of training in use a hundred years ago. Without doubt that system gave clearness, quickness, and a power of analysis not commonly found in the scholars of to-day. The older system had its faults, and carried an appearance of pedantry. But those forefathers of ours knew well how to state a subject and how to develop it: their line of argument, distinctly laid down,

went straight to the conclusion. Nowadays, with the universal effort after originality of presentation, many writers think at random; the upshot of which is vagueness, oddity, and confusion. A course of logic, *practical rather than theoretic*, in which the mind should be trained to the analysing and combination of propositions, would be of inestimable value to all our youth. Under a wise teacher they would avoid the faults of the Schoolmen, and the letter would not be permitted to kill the spirit. Being instructed how to reduce their ideas to the forms of syllogistic reasoning, they would assuredly gain clearness and method in thinking.

5. Nor must we at this point forget the culture of *the Imagination*, which in many ways affects character. Men are very differently endowed with the power of forming mental images. Some have none at all; and instead of recalling objects to mind with a rich imaginative colouring, they seem to remember only the bare facts. Yet this kind of cerebral activity, upon which imagination depends, may be much increased by culture.

The power of constructing clear mental pictures out of elements already acquired by experience is needful, not only for artists and novelists, but also for men engaged in business and in all branches of

science. There is no doubt that Sir Isaac Newton found it of great use in enabling him to work out the proof of the law of gravitation. It has done good service also in *the modern evolution theory* which is now made a presupposition of biology, and which has shown the world to be pregnant with purpose.

Perhaps to none is the gift of constructive imagination more useful than to *the student of history.* If he has the power of *visualisation*, and can call up in his mental imagery the whole scenes of the past, he will be able to present a vivid picture of the events, and make the historical panorama pass before the reader's eye with lifelike reality. The pages of Macaulay, who pre-eminently had the visualising mind, present us with many such storied pictures, in which kings and warriors breathe and speak again from the printed page.

We cannot enforce this truth better than by quoting the words of Professor Blackie: "As there are persons who seem to walk through life with their eyes open, seeing nothing; so there are others who read through books, and perhaps even cram themselves with facts, without carrying away any living pictures of significant story which might arouse the fancy in an hour of leisure, or gird them with endurance in a moment of difficulty. Ask yourself, there-

fore, always when you have read a chapter of any notable book, not what you saw printed on a grey page, *but what you saw pictured in the glowing gallery of your imagination.* Have your fancy always vivid, and full of body and colour. Count yourself not to know a fact when you know that it took place, but then only when you see it as it did take place."[1] It is greatly to be regretted that so many teachers have failed to discover the educational value of Imagination. They would leave it to the games of the nursery, where the children at their play simply revel in its delights. But can any thoughtful mind affirm that the power of imagination which created the *Iliad*, which constructed the *Inferno*, and which gave us our grand *Paradise Lost*, is a power to be neglected in education? The whole science of Psychology contradicts such an erroneous view.

The popular conception of Imagination is that it is the antithesis of what is practical. The "creature of imagination" is the day-dreamer, who feeds his mind on visionary projects, and whose weakness is discovered in every field of action.

[1] Compare also on Imagination, Stout, *Analytic Psychology*; F. Ryland, *Psychology*; W. James, *Principles of Psychology*; and especially Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, a delightfully instructive book.

Popularly he is thought of as a builder of air castles, full of hopeful cheeriness but totally ineffective. Yet it need not be so. If a boy is able *to visualise clearly the man he desires to be*, it will give him courage and determination to face the difficulties of the education that is to make him like his hero. Warren Hastings sat down on the side of a hill that overlooked his ancestors' lost demesnes, and, vividly picturing himself as the Squire thereof, went out to India with the resolution that, come what may, he would return and restore the family name of Hastings of Daylesford. If pupils could be got vividly to imagine the grand end of education, it would lend promptitude and decision to their efforts.

Not only so, but all teaching by example is conditioned by the learner's power of imagination. It is *the lack of imaginative sympathy* that prevents so many people from profiting by a visit to a gallery of paintings or of sculpture. It shut out a great mind like Darwin's from the possibility of enjoying Shakespeare. Well does every teacher of Christian verities know how difficult it is to get the mass of a congregation to apprehend vividly the life and death of Jesus Christ, and to grasp with true insight the central meaning of His mission. They seem to be unable to conceive any

life lived on principles so unlike those to which their nature is accustomed to respond.

Further, it is impossible, without a considerable amount of imagination, *to arrive at correct judgments* regarding our neighbours. It is W. E. H. Lecky who says that the human mind is "nearly always right in judging between right and wrong, but nearly always wrong in estimating degrees of guilt." Now the cause of this misjudgment is found in the extreme difficulty which most people feel of putting themselves into the place of those whose character or circumstances differ by whole horizons from their own. How difficult is it for any of us to realise the temptations of either princes or paupers, their whole environment and *entourage* being so unlike our own! What a stretch of imagination is requisite before a man of bright sanguineous temperament can sympathise with, and therefore rightly understand, the moods and ways of a melancholy and morose disposition! That deficiency hinders the action of our mind, and falsifies our judgment of our brother. *Historians confess this difficulty:* they know that correctly to understand the character and actors of a remote past, there is required a powerful imagination to realise their whole environment; and even then the writer must make allowance for the degree in

which his judgment is coloured by the moral tone of the times in which he has been educated. It is easy to judge the act of a Samson, a Jonah, a Judas; but it requires a large amount of imaginative sympathy aright to estimate the actor. Many centuries of Christian training and heredity have made an accurate judgment on our part very difficult. If we judge those by the same moral standard as we apply to characters of to-day, we shall err greatly in our measurement of their degrees of guilt.

6. To many, of necessity the culture of the intellect must be largely carried on *by means of reading*. While the primary sources of culture are found in thought, feeling, and action, yet books correct much that is erroneous and supply much that is deficient. At the present time they play a larger part than ever in mental training. Without them it is difficult to attain either to mental fulness or to breadth of view.

Lord Bacon, in one of his "picked and packed" Essays, says that studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. These are great advantages which every student of literature may possess. He further advises that men should make a discreet use of three distinct methods, described in the well-known sentence — "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an

exact man." There may be doubt as to what he means by "writing"; probably it refers to the habit of taking notes of what one observes or reads, rather than the work of composition. Such a habit certainly leads to exactness. But there can be no doubt as to what he means by "reading." It is the only way in which we can fill and enrich our mind with the best thought of the world.

The difficulty in reading is to find some rational principle of selection from the vast number of good books that now claim one's attention. Specialists and littérateurs may stray into enticing bypaths of learning; but the majority of readers must be content to travel along those turnpikes of knowledge which are found in the great authors who have mapped out the main lines of thought. And these are not many.

Though we have frequently visited the British Museum Library, and spent pleasant hours in its vast consulting-room, we never returned from it, or even from the large University Libraries, without feeling that after all our own little study of less than 1200 volumes possessed nearly everything of worth that had been said. The modern writers are excellent expounders and expanders of thought: many of them write in a beautiful style, and illumine old truths with bright scientific side-lights.

But practically we get little that is new from them: they merely give a fresh setting to the gems of the great authors. The setting is theirs, but *the jewel has been borrowed of the few master minds* that from their urns rule the ages, and whose gold is stamped and coined, and is current in all lands. No man can be long in their company without feeling his mind elevated, his sympathies widened, and his ideal of life ennobled. The editions of their works are within reach of all; and if the resolution be made, it is just as easy to be acquainted with these lofty minds as with the trashy products of a modern press. What a vast territory of knowledge might the young annex if they only resolved to devote to this best literature some of the time that they give to ephemeral journalism or to the daily newspaper!

7. For the culture of the mind, in its bearing on character, nothing is more essential than *intellectual honesty*. This is a virtue that should be inculcated by teachers on all pupils. And the bulwark of honesty in education is exact knowledge, along with the scientific habit of mind that tests references and examines every fact for itself. All coming to conclusions without sufficient examination of the premisses, all getting at a Greek or Latin author's meaning by happy guessing that

saves the trouble of grammatical construction, is detrimental to a student's mind. It is an encouragement to mental inertia and a yielding to moral cowardice. *To guess is worse than indolence: it is dishonesty.* It is the refuge of the man who does not care for truth, and who will in other intellectual matters be careless as to what opinions he holds or what judgments he arrives at. All education should aim at distinguishing reality from semblance and truth from falsehood. True mental culture will make it impossible for a student to be content with reaching an unreasoned judgment or with belief in a result that he cannot verify. Wherever facts are imperfectly grasped, the judgment must be erroneous. When a man is guilty of mental slovenliness, it means that he is not afraid of intellectual dishonesty.

The honest man abhors deception, and most of all detests self-deception. He will gain the truth at any cost. He is free from doubleness, duplicity, and doubt. He wishes to have the single eye that fills the whole body with light. His maxim is, "Buy the truth and sell it not." He will insist on knowing all the facts, and will be always ready to receive new light. Intellectual honesty forbids the shutting of the eyes to disturbing elements that may upset former conclusions. It aims at

making us fair in argument, just towards opponents, sound in judgment, and devoted to truth. No other mental virtue is so far-reaching in its value. Perfect intellectual honesty makes a man accurate, industrious, unprejudiced, sincere, and therefore wise. It is one of the very rarest of the excellences of Christian character. It is the sworn foe of slander, gossip, malice, and all uncharitableness. It hates the *suggestio falsi* not less than the *suppressio veri*, for in both the root of dishonesty may be found. It is the bond-slave of truth, of the whole truth, and of nothing but the truth. It is only among truth's harmonies that a healthy mind can live and move. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and any praise, think on these things."

The soft blue sky did never melt
Into his heart, he never felt
The witchery of the soft blue sky!

—WORDSWORTH.

To give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.—ISAIAH.

Great thoughts, great feelings came to them,
Like instincts, unawares.

—MONCKTON MILNES.

Their cause I plead, plead it in heart and mind;
A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind.

—GARRICK.

In came Mrs. F——, one vast, substantial smile.—DICKENS.

When I was musing the fire burned: then I spake.—OLD TESTAMENT.

The greatest happiness of the greatest number.—BENTHAM.

Is there evil but on earth? or pain in every peopled sphere?
Well, be grateful for the sounding watchword "Evolution" here.
Only That which made us meant us to be mightier by and by,
Set the sphere of all the boundless Heavens within the human eye.

—TENNYSON.

CHAPTER XIII

Culture of the Emotions

Between the emotions and the intellectual processes spoken of in the previous chapter there exists a very intimate relation. The force that influences us as moral and responsible beings is the power of truth. That truth must first of all be presented to the understanding, so that it may be firmly apprehended. But as, in this process of apprehension, we continue to reflect upon the truth, we find that it does not lie dormant in the chamber of the mind. It begins to kindle emotions in connection with itself. Reflection on the discoveries of science will stir feelings of wonder and admiration, just as reflection on some historical tragedy will awaken emotions of pity or of anger.

Man is not a duality, but a unity; and it is the same person who thinks and feels and wills. Psychology has forbidden us to speak of the "Tripartite nature of man." We must not cut up our nature

into sections, or condense it into compartments. There is a wonderful harmony pervading the whole inner man eminently worthy of its Creator: so that this conscious self of ours shall, as one personality, think, and feel, and resolve.

We are consequently just as responsible for our feelings as we are for our thoughts or our volitions. They are not merely shadows crossing our landscape, nor irresponsible tides flowing in upon us, we know not whence or how; they are part of our own psychical state. It is *we* who feel sad or joyful. Gratitude means a grateful man. Love does not exist apart from the person who loves, nor hate apart from him who hates, and who is responsible for entertaining such an emotion. All our judgments of character proceed upon this basis. We condemn a man who is ungrateful to his parents or unkind to his children. We pass a verdict of severe censure on the hard-hearted miser whose finer feelings have been petrified by his love of gold. But this man should properly be regarded with pity, as the victim of heredity or of fate, if he had no control over his feelings.

On a person wholly overcome by such an emotion as anger or fear we do not pass a moral judgment. Of such we are accustomed to say that "he is not himself," or that "he is mad." For the time he is

like a man intoxicated, whom we do not consider to be accountable for his acts, although we hold him responsible for bringing himself into such a condition. All action which is moral must be rational and intelligent.

Both our condemnation and our praise proceed upon the assumption that men directly are responsible for their emotions. When men say, "He spoke under much evident restraint," or when they speak of some one "giving vent to his anger," the popular language is witness to the fact that we have power over the whole domain of feeling.

1. It follows that the culture of the emotions is not less important than the culture of the intellect. This opinion, however, is not commonly entertained. Yet a little consideration will convince us that conduct is shaped much more by feelings than by opinions. It is not in ideas that the strongest impulses to action are found. New ideas percolate slowly through men's minds; but when the tide of thought and feeling begins to rise it moves with tremendous force, creating new desires and consecrating life to new ends. The causes of the great historic revolutions that have turned the course of history have been found mainly in ambition, revenge, love, or hatred—the great instinctive passions of mankind. A man who is devoid of feeling, however keen

his intellect may be, is felt by every one to be without an essential element of humanity. If the fires within him have burned down to cold grey ashes, if he is a man without a heart and without a grain of sympathy, he is one whom none will trust, and very few will love—

"A Stoic of the woods, a man without a tear."

It was a claim of Stoicism that it was unshaken either by pain or pleasure. But he that attains to this position is far from being a perfect man. We never find Christianity encouraging the extinction of feelings. The "*nil admirari*" manner was not favoured by Jesus Christ. He rather taught His disciples to control their desires and to stimulate their emotions in a right direction. Love is the key-note of His commandment and the dynamic of all Christian duty. The man who is without moral feeling is spoken of by St. Jude as "twice dead." He does not possess the capacity of emotional and intellectual response, without which there can be no perception and no love of moral quality in that which he beholds. All true religion quickens the life of emotion and recognises the importance of right feelings.

2. On the other hand, in the forming of character, it is not less necessary that *we should learn to con-*

trol our feelings. Everyone knows how the flood of emotion tends, in moments of mental excitement, to overflow its banks. Persons of a buoyant, sanguine temperament, having great susceptibility, are very easily elevated to heights of joy or thrown down into the depths of sorrow. Those to whom a drastic, choleric temperament lends fervour, are afflicted with a tendency to passion, and are betrayed into outbursts of anger. Many, devoid of moral courage, are overmastered by the emotion of fear, and consequently injure their character by folly or falsehood. Others yield to the love of money, which soon passes into the pitiless greed of the miser. The child, the lunatic, and the idiot are all marked by their inability to control their emotions. The strong character is never at the mercy of transient impulses, but has learned to keep them under firm control.

Some would maintain that it is better *to give our feelings expression* than to govern them by inhibition. Tears are felt to be a relief in times of great sorrow. News is brought to a mother of her son's death on the battlefield: it goes to her heart with the stab of a spear. She becomes pallid, motionless, and her heart all but ceases to beat. The physician tells her that the only hope is that grief shall find expression in tears. The

outburst of passion gives relief to the pent-up feelings—

> "Home they brought her warrior dead:
> She nor swoon'd, nor uttered cry:
> All her maidens, watching, said,
> 'She must weep, or she will die.'
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Rose a nurse of ninety years,
> Put his child upon her knee—
> Like summer tempests came her tears—
> 'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'"

It has been suggested that such expression invariably assuages passion, and that to inhibit such expression is unreasonable. The feeling would soon die out, as an over-full pond will empty itself through a free outlet.

Those who maintain this forget the important ethical fact that in every such case *the great law of habit* comes into operation. Every time that passion gets such an outlet it channels its path more deeply. It tends on the next opportunity to do the same thing with greater ease. Every discharge of feeling *goes off with an easier trigger*. It becomes a matter of course. It grows automatic, fixed. People who indulge these bad feelings excuse themselves by saying, "I speak out my mind." But all such actions are dangerous, for this reason that they have reflex influences. Under the law of habit such a person

becomes simply the slave of his passion, the centre of dispeace in the family, and a nuisance to society.

No! we must inhibit our feelings, and we can do so by instituting a better state of feeling and by actions incompatible with the emotions which we wish to suppress. Teach a greedy child to give away something with as good grace as possible, and there is greater likelihood of his overcoming his greed than by mere suppression of it. *Deeds always react on the feelings which prompt them.* Do a kind thing and your kind feelings will be strengthened. What is the reward of doing good? *It is the power to do better and to feel better next time.* The best reward is in a deeper love of goodness. The deed reacts upon the beneficent heart and augments its resources. The kind disposition which dictated the gift to the poor is blessed by the enrichment of itself. It is a principle of Christian ethics that righteousness is its own infallible reward. God rewards every act of mercy by making us more merciful; every deed of charity by deepening our desire for charity; every righteous action by increasing our regard for righteousness.

3. In actual life some degree of desire or aversion seems to accompany every idea, whether it be a percept or an image. The contemplation of any mental picture invariably makes us desire that it may

become a reality. Suggest an idea to a man in a hypnotic trance, and he at once makes an attempt to realise it. That is the normal purpose for which all emotion is given.

It is not wrong to enjoy a state of pleasurable emotion. Since feeling springs out of thought, good thoughts will naturally produce joyous feelings, as a beautiful rose fills the room with a delicious fragrance. Like that indescribable odour, the influence of a fine thought steals into the feelings and stirs them into a pleasurable state. But while one may rightly sit and enjoy the fragrance of the rose, it is morally impossible to sit still and merely enjoy an emotional state without doing an injury to one's self. For every feeling that does not lead to some end beyond itself reacts upon the moral nature, drugging the spiritual energies and weakening the will.

The purpose of all emotion is to be that which steam is to the engine; it goes to drive the wheels of duty. "The whole moral organism," says Professor James, "physiologically considered, is but a machine for converting stimuli into reactions." In the operations of that machine the feelings play not an unimportant part. They furnish the needful stimulus to action. If they do not accomplish this object they have missed their primary end. An engine, standing at a railway station noisily blowing off her steam, is

the image of many an emotional nature, that responds with quick feeling to a tale of pity or to some theatrical tragedy, but *allows its emotion to evaporate in a wave of mere feeling*. To indulge in strong emotion without giving it an outlet in the corresponding action, is to indulge in a species of dram-drinking. It takes the edge off the conscience. It brings a veil over the moral vision. It acts as an opiate on the mind. Truths which, rightly apprehended, should be motor forces to action, lose their power to stimulate. And the weakened will is as helpless to act a manly part as is the will of the street loafer, or that of the bibulous, tear-shedding inebriate.

> "The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
> Unless the deed go with it."

Which is to say, *unless the emotion direct itself towards strenuous action*, it fails in its intent, and injures where it should have benefited the character.

Here we see how dangerous it is to indulge emotion without giving to it its proper and legitimate outlet. How many are content to feel pity, while nothing is done by them for the amelioration of the degraded or the restoration of the outcast! But the emotion of pity alone does not make a man pitiful, any more than the feeling of penitence entitles to the name of penitent. The good life is

known by its issues, as the good tree by its fruits. The leaves of emotion may beautify a Christian life; but only the fruits of action justify the name. And as this is the evidence by which we judge others, it is also the evidence that we must afford to others by which they may judge us. "Let your light so shine before men that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven." The sincerity of penitence and the reality of love to God are best shown in the practical outcome of a holy and loving life. So soon as *this vital connection between emotion and action is ignored*, there arises at once a danger to the Christian character. The emotional hearer, quick to react under the sound of the gospel, but weak in will, is portrayed by a master-hand in the Parable of the Sower: "He heareth the word, and straightway with joy receiveth it; yet hath he no root in himself; and when persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth." The lack of depth is the weakness of this hearer. The quick springing seed soon withers away, because in his shallow nature it has no room to root itself. Of this emotional, sanguine temperament was the young man who, full of warm expressions of profound admiration, came running to Christ with the words, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Such bright, hopeful people

are amiable and interesting. But such religion lies only on the surface; and the test—"Go, sell that thou hast"—which was proposed by Christ, soon revealed the shallowness of the youth's convictions.

In the hour of his conversion, probably the emotions of St. Paul did not differ very widely from those of this young man. But the apostle had gone through a period of great intellectual perplexity before he attained vital faith; and *his heart was touched through his mind.* The moment the voice from heaven reached him, his question was, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" The union of reason and feeling became a motive to action, a supreme inducement to pursue the great ends of the kingdom into which Christ had called him. By thus flowing out into activity the feeling of love to Christ did not lose itself, but became morally educated, strengthened, and deepened.

4. This fact is of the highest importance in the religious life. We frequently meet people who are aggrieved because *the joy first experienced* by them in turning to God has faded away from their spirits as the evening light fades off the landscape. They complain bitterly that they have been deceived by the description of the Christian life as one of abiding joy. But it is possible to become as self-centred in the search for joy as in the search for any other

selfish end. It is well to remember that feelings come and go, and to a certain extent are dependent upon our physical condition and upon temperament.

Further, the nature of man is not designed only to yield lofty emotions of joy, but, like the fields of the farmer, the heart must occasionally lie fallow. Tides of emotion have their natural flow and ebb. But these fluctuations of feeling do not affect our relation to our Lord. Our aim must be, not to reach a highly exalted state of rapture, but *to do the will of God from the heart.* The whole aim of the Christian life is to be conformed to the image of God's own Son. Such growing conformity will bring to every Christian as much joyous feeling as is good for him. And if he have not all that he desires, he must dare to believe that God is pleased with him even though He withhold the sweet sense of His gracious favour. A highly emotional state is neither needful nor healthy. What we should aim at is continuance in the doing of God's will, and in bringing forth fruit unto holiness.

Men are very apt to appropriate the consolations of Christianity without first making *that self-surrender* of themselves which Christianity invariably demands. The craving for religious rapture lies at the root of all fanaticism. The history of the Church has proved that men who have never gone through a

deep repentance for sin, nor crucified their pride, may yet in some moment of rapturous emotion convince themselves that they are favourites of Heaven. But exalted feelings are not necessarily the work of the Holy Spirit. Apart from other signs of grace, it is dangerous to rest satisfied with them. To be of worth they must be accompanied by a change of nature, by a growing likeness to Christ, and by such practical Christian conduct as shall make clear to all men that these are the healthy emotions accompanying the presence of the Spirit in the heart.

The only way in which a Christian can assure himself of his standing in grace is not by feelings, but by continuance in well-doing. The one real proof to a man that he is Christ's is that he is growing Christlike. Many will say, "Lord, Lord," and yet not do the things He has commanded. In the sphere of conduct ours must be a serviceable and useful life; in the sphere of personal morality it must be a surrendered will, a loving heart, and a disciplined character.

This unity of the inward and the outward, this continual passing of pious feeling into practical and righteous action, is the only way by which a strong and healthy Christian manhood can be sustained. Religious feeling has thus achieved its normal purpose, and there is now perfect harmony in the soul,

because there is *right interpenetration of thought, emotion*, and *volition*. The great work intended in all moral culture is that these three should be equally developed, should aid, and should reciprocally mould one another into the perfect beauty of a well-balanced character.

Therefore it is that, while many despise feeling, and regard the emotional man with his open, buoyant, and self-surrendering susceptibility as weak and fickle in character, we must from an ethical point of view insist upon the culture of the emotions in order to the production of a character fervid and yet strong. *The strong character is one that is full of feeling*, but of feeling held in leash, controlled and utilised as a passion for action. Where there is only excitability of the psychical life, where the sanguine is the habitual mood, there the character is devoid of decision, of constancy, and of consistency. Its very quickness of feeling breeds a love of change, and oftentimes it will be marred by a *moodiness* that is far from manly, and a *volatility* that is far from virtuous. But when feeling lends fervour to work, when the æsthetic emotion of enjoyment is converted into the practical passion for action, this union of excellences issues in the admirable all-round harmonious character, the product of fine feeling, of strong will, and of moral culture. Courage, energy,

aspiration, enthusiasm, all conjoin in such an individuality, and we have a picture *with foreground and background*, with depth and breadth, than which there is nothing fairer to look upon in God's universe.

Life is short; art is long; opportunity is fleeting; experiment slippery; judgment difficult.—HIPPOCRATES.

They made a conscience to help themselves.—BOOK OF MACCABEES.

In that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith.—ST. PAUL.

There is a conscience in every man which distinguishes between principles of heart as well as external actions, and without being consulted magisterially asserts itself and approves or condemns the man accordingly.—BUTLER.

Conscience is the absolute in the soul.—PRINCIPAL SHAIRP.

Lass uns die alten engen Ordnungen
Gering nicht achten!

—SCHILLER.

CHAPTER XIV

Culture of Conscience

In the upbuilding of Christian character, Conscience is an essential factor. It is impossible to conceive a man of high character who is not conscientious in all his actions, who is not sharp to distinguish betwixt the right and the wrong, to cleave to the one and shun the other.

A Christian man may not possess a fine intellect or æsthetic emotions; but he must have a keen perception of what is his duty, with an accompanying intense feeling of love for the right. He will not be content to accept truth merely because of its traditions; nor will he give over his moral judgment to the keeping of a priest or of a political party. If truth is ever to win his verdict, it must thoroughly approve itself to his conscience.

In the very beginning of the Christian life, it was an accusing conscience that made him flee to Christ for deliverance from the burden of sin. It is this same faculty that in the Christian saint becomes

the means of his growth in grace. And it is the very essence of Protestantism that biblical truth should be vindicated to every man's conscience in order that he may attain to the assurance of faith.

In the Old Testament the word Conscience is not to be found. *The objective law of God takes the place of it.* In those earlier stages of his spiritual history, man is always addressed as a moral being, amenable to God's judgment and capable of being taught His will. The functions of conscience are attributed chiefly to the "*heart*," which is looked upon as the organ of moral and spiritual life.

In the New Testament men have passed through the infantile stages of growth, and have come into possession of their moral rights. The grace of God has appeared in the person of Christ, teaching men to live soberly, righteously, and godly; and the question emerges with new importance: Can man, despite his deep sense of sinfulness, have peace with God and with himself? Has conscience a place in the economy of grace? The answer is, *that conscience is the inward revelation of right.* It is the organ through which the voice of God speaks to man. It is the "pedagogue" that leads us to Christ, while in His sacrifice it may itself be cleansed from dead works to serve the living God. The washings of the Jewish ritual reached only the flesh, concerned

only the cup and the platter. In the sacrifice of the Sinbearer, man may be brought into moral and spiritual oneness with God, the conscience pacified, and all the springs of action touched to finer issues.

Yet in no part of the New Testament do any of the inspired writers speak of conscience as a faculty of man's nature. A correct biblical psychology teaches that so far from being a separate faculty adjusted to a special end, conscience is simply the man himself as made in God's image, listening to His voice, and recognising His will. It is therefore *the voice of our own inmost nature* witnessing to God's voice and growing into clearness with each revelation of the Divine mind.

We need not dwell upon the history of this question, nor on the different views of conscience maintained by the Utilitarian and Intuitionalist schools. Among British moralists Bishop Butler stands supreme for the emphasis which he lays on the worth of conscience. He recognises the fact that it comprehends not only an element of *feeling*, but also one of *rationality*. He calls it "the supreme principle of reflection which distinguishes between the internal principles of man's heart as well as external actions, which passes judgment on himself and them, pronounces some actions to be in themselves righteous, just, right, and

good; others to be in themselves wrong, evil, unjust, which, without being consulted, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns him, the doer of them, accordingly."

In conscience there is both an *emotional* and a *rational* element. The active feeling of approbation or remorse is not more prominent than is the judicial element. Whenever the moral judgment is accompanied by the appropriate emotion, there will be no hesitancy as to what line of conduct to pursue. All those tragic situations of life, on the other hand, where the action of moral judgment is followed by the stings of acute remorse, are brought about by the reason coming into opposition with the moral feeling. When feeling thus conflicts with principle, we seem to be divided against ourselves. We are in the position of Desdemona in the play of *Othello*, who exclaims—

"I do perceive here a divided duty."

The question at once arises, on which side are truth and righteousness? Thus it is that we are compelled to wait for more light upon the path of duty, and to feel that in such situations the appeal from conscience must still be to conscience cleansed and enlightened. Conscience is the voice of our inmost nature, and is bound to grow more clear in its

decisions through the progressive revelation of God's will to the individual and to society.

Most of the difficulties that have arisen in connection with this subject have resulted from regarding conscience as an independent faculty that issues its own decrees, and speaks with the authority of an immediately Divine voice. But if the above interpretation of the biblical doctrine of conscience be correct, it is rather the organ through which the Divine voice speaks to us. It is not a faculty with an innate power of judgment entirely remote from our consciousness. It is simply our true self testing our character by the moral law, a law which is always internal and self-imposed. This view also harmonises with the scriptural doctrine of sin, which affirms that conscience has been blunted and rendered dormant by a long course of evil, and has been biassed in favour of customs which are not moral.

Hence it is that Scripture speaks of a *defiled* conscience, connecting it chiefly with mercenary motives. St. Paul with much pungency censures those vain talkers who "for filthy lucre's sake" introduced discord and error into the Churches of Crete. He sharply reproves them, and adds (Tit. i. 15): "To the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure;

but both their mind and their conscience are defiled."

Conscience becomes infected through the pollution of some permitted sin. The fine moral palate which was so sensitive to perceive the difference between the love of lucre and the love of God, between honesty and the spirit of the world, has ceased to detect the presence of evil. It can no longer discern those fine spiritual distinctions. A defiled conscience demands that things good and evil shall be highly seasoned in order to quicken its jaded taste. Plain, honest Christian conduct is a weariness to it, and for the higher virtues of the Christian life it has no appetite whatever. Very soon such defilement extends *from conscience to the moral nature*, and a debased conscience results in impairment of Christian influence and in rapid deterioration of character. Such a conscience must be "purged from dead works to serve the living God." It may be through much trial that such a purgation is brought about. It must be by the operation of the cleansing Spirit of Christ enlightening the mind to perceive the right, and strengthening the will to do it.

But a lower depth of moral degradation seems to be indicated by the other Scripture term "a *seared* conscience." The phrase seems to indicate a sad state in which the moral sense has become totally

indifferent to the demands of the law, and some fatal incubus lies heavily on the moral judgment. The springs of better feeling are dried up. The man has reached the last degree of depravity, in which he ceases to care for a better life because he has ceased to see its beauty. The hot irons of vice have burned up the finer feelings, and conscience, like the blacksmith's finger, has lost its sensitivity. Its acute discriminating touch is gone, and it is incapable of moral discernment. The practical experience of daily life confirms the word of Scripture, "seared as with a hot iron." What other language could better describe the *low animalism* of the adulterer and the inebriate, and all the vicious ruffianism found in convicts' prisons? It is the awful condition to which men come by a long course of sinning against the light. Possibly it may be reached even by the way of miserliness. The intense love of money seems to have a terrible power to scarf over the inner eye, to dry up all the springs of love and comradeship, and to make a man's heart as hard as a millstone. When Shakespeare makes Hubert, the chamberlain, threaten with a hot iron to burn out Prince Arthur's eyes, the boy replies that even

> "A grain of dust, a gnat, a wandering hair,
> Any annoyance in that precious sense,"

would be enough to make the cruel chamberlain understand the preciousness of eyesight. But a seared eye would not feel any of those annoyances. And, similarly, a seared conscience may experience no discomfort though appealed to by the claims of friendship, the voice of duty, or the call of affection. The phrase seems to indicate the lowest stage of moral corruption to which a man can descend.

The "*weak* conscience," to which St. Paul makes reference, is really an uneducated conscience. It is easily offended, and those who have advanced to the higher stages of Christian life will be careful not to give offence to its conscientious scruples. If a seared conscience has lost all fine discernment, the weak conscience suffers from its morbid sensitivity. It becomes thus a scrupulous conscience, and is the cause of many errors in moral judgment. St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans lays down the rules prescribed by Christian charity with reference to those who had conscientious scruples about eating meat that had been offered to an idol. He bids the stronger beware of so using his Christian liberty as to injure the unenlightened conscience of the weaker brother. St. Paul's sympathies are entirely with the "strong" Christian. To him nothing was in itself unclean, and he could make a temperate and thankful use of all

the bounties of Providence. He does not defend the timidity and the scrupulosity of the weak brother whose conscience continually troubles him about meats and fast-days. He will not disavow his principles in the interests of a weak conscience. Only he will obey the great law of love, and under it will try to comprehend the point of view from which the weak brother regards these matters. In the great tolerance born of love and patience we must reverence and respect a scrupulous conscience, while we shall make every endeavour to educate and direct it.

In the struggle and trials of the religious life, *conscience shares in the moral education* that comes to all who claim Divine help and make constant use of the means of grace. It will become increasingly sensitive to the indication of God's will, and more quick to catch His voice amid the voices of the crowd. Conscience, far from being silenced by the guiding Spirit, speaks with a new tone of authority: "conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. ix. 1). In all individual questions of duty, a better balance is given to the moral judgment. The blinding effect of bias is removed. Higher motives are brought into operation that take the side of conscience and direct it to worthy ends. In the spiritual man, conscience, which at first was largely negative, saying, "Thou shalt not!" gradually becomes

more positive, uttering "Thou shalt!" It permeates every sphere of duty, and makes even drudgery divine. "Trust that man in nothing," says Sterne, "who has not a conscience in everything." He who is led by the Spirit will be ready to obey every command of conscience and to listen to its gentlest suggestions. Such obedience is the mark of the finest natures. The cleansed conscience is thus kept clean as the believer is led into the doing of all God's will with joyfulness. To its every reproof he bows; to its every hint he gives heed. And as thus he progresses in the spiritual life, fidelity in little duties leads to fidelity in large duties. Tender conscientiousness leads to inward faithfulness. Obedience is followed by new obedience; and he reaches the joyful testimony of the apostle: "Our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience."

We may therefore lay down the following rules:—

1. We should never *stifle* the voice of conscience. That can only lead to the exclusion of any further light, and to increased aberration from the path of righteousness. Blindness is blameworthy when it is the result of wilfulness. If what appears to be a conflict of duties meet us, we must not fear to enter the conflict, and must seek all possible light upon its solution. We may be sure that the conflict is only apparent, that duty is always one and certain, and

that, if we only wait in prayer on God's will and exclude all selfish desires, the clouds will lift and the proper order and gradation of our duties will be ascertained.

2. We should also avoid a *weak scrupulosity*. This is a proof either of a morbid state of feeling, or of the fact that a man has not discovered his true vocation in life. He who has found out his aptitudes and is making a good use of them in God's service, has no time to attend to the infinitesimal queries of a scrupulous conscience. It is a paradox familiar to ethics, that a man can do his duty well only by interesting himself fully in his work, and not by dwelling too much on personal motives.

3. Conscience must go into the performance of *every duty*. In all actions we should endeavour to occupy a just attitude, and should employ only righteous means to bring about righteous ends. A conscientious man is one who will act only from pure motives and with just intentions.

Weak human nature will always give a handle to the Jesuitical doctrine, that the end justifies the means. But while we are convinced of the benefits that would accrue to our Protestant Churches by a wise system of *direction of conscience*, the absurdities of casuistry are too patent to permit of any sympathy with Probabilism and with Jesuitical ethics. A con-

science that is always going to a priest for guidance is in a sure way to be weakened and probably ruined. An honest unperverted conscience is offended by the distinction which the Casuists draw between *perfect and imperfect duties*, the former including the duties of right, and the latter all other duties that constitute virtue, but the breach of which does not involve guilt. The distinction is totally unscriptural, since the obligation of love is by the Casuists put in the class of imperfect duties. If the absence of love does not involve guilt, it certainly involves moral demerit, which is a sin. But apart from this it is spoken of by St. Paul as a duty. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another."

In this connection Casuists speak of *degrees* of obligation; but the distinction is one which is not objective. It exists only in the mind of the man who may be aware of a difference in the depth of his sense of binding obligation. There are those who feel more bound to speak the truth when they are put upon oath. But every right-minded man realises that he is bound on all occasions to speak the truth and nothing but the truth. Truth is one and duty is one; and the duties of love and of kindness are not one whit less obligatory than the duty of speaking the truth. What is a man's duty at every particular moment and in varying

circumstances must be decided in the court of each man's conscience.

All duties have an absolute character. The "*Counsels of Perfection*," which are prescribed by the Roman Catholic Church for those who live the higher Christian life, proceed upon a false conception of the law of duty. If these counsels are not obligatory on all Christians, they are not to be regarded as duties for any. The secular member needs no more freedom from restraint than the saintly member of the Church. To find a region above the level of the law in which the legal stage is left behind, is to place the law in a false antithesis to the love of God. *Lack of love is breach of law.* In every true life the law of God is loved as being the expression of God's own nature. Our freedom is not in contradiction to our duty: it blends with all moral imperatives into the loving and willing obedience of a holy life. The counsel of perfection marks an era of degraded morals. It is the shadow of the "second best" cast upon pure morality, and only serves to hide its beauty and dim its lustre.[1] He that carries conscience into every department of duty, can never be content with the second best. In all his work he will strive to be perfect, even as his Father in heaven is perfect.

[1] J. Wedgwood, *The Moral Ideal*, p. 373.

4. The work of the Church in educating the conscience must not, however, be neglected because the system has been abused. In the awakening of conscience, in the right direction and education of it, the Protestant Churches have not been so active as they should have been. The herald of the gospel must make manifest the truth so as to "commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." The gospel of Christ, faithfully proclaimed out of a loving heart, will open many a locked chamber and reveal the hidden secret of the heart. That gospel has never failed to enlist conscience on its side, since with it works the Paraclete, convincing of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The preacher should never forget that in each bosom the word of truth has an ally which is the touchstone of character and a schoolmaster to lead to Christ; and he should strive to awaken and instruct it.

That is also a work which might well engage the earnest attention of all parents and teachers. The education of to-day excels in methods that tend to sharpen the intellect and cultivate the æsthetic taste; but the moral sense is sadly neglected. Yet the great end of all education is to produce honest and upright citizens. Until this work of moral education is taken up in the homes and schools of our land, we shall not see that Christian public opinion created

which is the strongest defence of virtue and the best guarantee of good government. It is not by Acts of Parliament that we can drive out drunkenness and heal the hurt of the daughter of the people. That desirable consummation is possible only by the awakening and the enlightenment of the social conscience. To this every Christian man should contribute by courageous testimony in favour of right doing and against every form of wickedness. In these days of *Sturm und Drang* we need a more robust type of Christianity beside which the finest natural morality will look poor and dim, and through which integrity, truth, valour, temperance, purity, and charity will voice themselves with no indistinct tone, and be a living proof of the power and reality of religion.

The ethical work of the Christian teacher becomes more necessary as the Christian problems of our time increase in complexity. Well it is for the Church and for the State when by the quickening of the individual moral sense the public conscience is stirred into keen sensitivity regarding the solution of these problems. As the morning sun that brightens the hill-tops very soon fills the valleys, so by the light that fills the loftiest minds the humblest homes are to be illumined. The Old Testament prophets were called seers: for what they saw with the cleansed

vision, they declared with the courageous lip. "The leadership of the public conscience has ever been given to the chosen prophets to whom the word of the Lord came with power."

"God give us men! A time like this demands
Great hearts, strong minds, true faith, and willing hands,
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honour, men who will not lie.
For, while the rabble with their thumbworn creeds,
Their large professions and their little deeds,
Wrangle in selfish strife, lo! Freedom weeps,
Wrong rules the land, and waiting Justice sleeps."

O. W. HOLMES.

TRAINING OF THE WILL

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers of Good, the Powers of Ill,
Strewing balm or shedding poison, in the fountains of the Will.
—TENNYSON.

To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.—ST. PAUL.

My poverty but not my will consents.
—SHAKESPEARE.

Be there a will, and wisdom finds a way.
—GEORGE CRABBE.

What though the field be lost?
All is not lost: the unconquerable will,
And courage never to submit or yield.
—MILTON.

On his visage middle age
Had slightly pressed its signet sage:
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare.
—SCOTT.

The star of the unconquered will.
—LONGFELLOW.

How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure.
—S. JOHNSON.

There is nothing in the world that can be termed absolutely and altogether good, except it be a good will.—IMMANUEL KANT.

CHAPTER XV

Training of the Will

In speaking of the training of the Will, we should take care that we know the meaning of the terms that we use. So many controversies have arisen in connection with what is signified by the word, that we must beware of misunderstanding it and its relation to character. We know the famous saying of Novalis, that "character is a completely fashioned will." It has also been defined as "a habit of will." The man of good character is the man who always wills the thing that is right.

We have already said that as conduct is the outcome of character, so character is the exponent of personality. Now in personality the will is the ultimate and central element. Ideas and feelings we can control; our mind we may compel to attend to one subject, and then turn it to another. But as soon as the will-power is withdrawn, the mind begins to wander into vacancy, until by a new effort of will we bring it back to the subject. Clearly, then, the

will is not correctly spoken of as a faculty. It is the self: it is the man resolving, determining, acting. I can get behind thought and emotion, but I cannot get behind will. It is the ultimate element in my personal being.

The normal end of all thought and emotion is action. In what we regard as a complete act, cognition, emotion, and volition work in harmony. With the idea in the mind there comes a feeling of the worth of the object, which then becomes an end to be willed. Some excellent book on a subject in which I am deeply interested is spoken of; I inquire about it and conceive highly of it. And the more this conception becomes united in its contents, the more it is accompanied by emotions that create for me a value in the book and make its purchase a desirable end. I come to the resolution to purchase it. That resolve is (as the etymology of the word implies) an unbinding, a liberation, of my feelings that they may escape into action. With the idea to be realised the will unites itself in a resolution to bring about the desired end; and therefore I buy the volume and devour its contents.

Some imagine that before action can take place there must always be some mental antecedent, some command or fiat given in consciousness. Modern psychology has taught us that this happens only in

what is called deliberate action, when the mind is attracted by many objects that are antagonistic or inconsistent with each other. But in our usual daily action this is not so. "The bare idea of a moment's sensible effort is a sufficient motor-cue. . . . Whilst talking I become conscious of a pin on the floor or of some dust on my sleeve: without interrupting the conversation I brush away the dust or pick up the pin. I make no express resolve; but the mere perception of the object and the fleeting notion of the act seem of themselves, without any fiat, to bring the latter about" (James). All the common acts of life, our walking, rising, talking, happen in this manner: they do not require a distinct resolution of the will, but follow in direct sequence the preceding thought.

The reason of the popular idea, that a fiat of the will must precede every act, is that as a matter of fact we do have many ideas that are never translated into action. But the cause of this is, not that ideas have no impulsive force, but that some antagonistic idea arises to inhibit them. Then we have to deliberate and choose between them, and come to a decision in which we utter our fiat and resolve to act.

What then is the chief function of the will? It is (1) to regulate all these impulsive tendencies to action, the beginnings of which are already given in mind

and feeling; and (2) to choose amid antagonistic ideas, and resolve to follow only such a course of action as is consistent with the great end of life. It is to govern and organise the movements in a manner compatible with our character.

1. In the regulation of these impulses we have to pause and *deliberate* before coming to a decision. We put an arrest upon further action until we see how the new line of conduct which is contemplated will affect our conception of self. We check the immediate impulse that we may have time to consider its tendency and ultimate results. In such deliberation lies the hope of the man who has hitherto been the slave of an impulsive temper. If only he would pause for a moment before exploding into a fit of anger, if only he could find time to deliberate on the situation, and reflect upon the various courses possible in his position, he would save himself from an exhibition of unmanly passion. It is because he will give his passion vent, and will not deliberately look at it, conceive it aright, and call it by its right name, that he becomes the victim of an ungovernable temper.

Deliberation, being only an arrest of action, is in reality a state of unstable equilibrium, during which the mind oscillates between two alternatives before coming to a decision. There may be before the

mind only the alternatives of doing a thing or of leaving it undone; or, in the more difficult forms of deliberation, there may be what is called a conflict of motives.[1] But whether it be a line of action that has to be chosen or a motive that has to be estimated, the question for consideration is always the same. Motives are not constituted simply by pleasure or passion or dominant desire; they depend upon the nature of the "universe" within which they emerge. *It is the man that makes the motive*; and it is the man, the self, that comes to the decision. He asks himself whether this line of action is one which is in harmony with that universe of aims, that whole past, present, and future which he calls himself. Can he initiate this scheme and bring it into conformity with his life-purpose? Is the impulse to movement one which it is consistent for *him* to obey? Here it is the self, the character, which must decide and give the casting vote. He selects between the possibilities presented to him; and sooner or later he comes to a decision by which he will stand or fall.

2. While in deliberation the man is only making up his mind, in decision he has come to know it. He utters his voluntary fiat in favour of the chosen line of action. Vacillation is over, and the moment for action has come.

[1] Stout, *Manual of Psychology*, vol. ii. p. 586.

Professor James, in his very interesting chapter on Will, speaks of five types of decision.[1] The first is the reasonable type, where the conclusive argument for the decision usually is, that we can refer the case to a class over which we are accustomed to act in a stereotyped way as being clearly helpful or detrimental to ourselves. In the second and third types we are determined by external or internal causes of an accidental character, the latter depending greatly upon the nervous discharge that suddenly impels us to action. This type is characteristic of men of the "world-shaking type, the Napoleons, Luthers, etc., in whom tenacious passion combines with excellent activity." The fourth form of decision is one in which we suddenly pass from an easy to a strenuous and sober mood, because, owing to some change in the observer's point of view, things take on new value, conscience awakes, and a great crisis in life arrives. All those changes that "make new men" of us come under this head. In the final type the evidence on both sides is so evenly balanced that it is clear nothing but one's own act of will can incline the beam. It is the "slow, dead heave of the will" that distinguishes this form of decision from all others. In the greater number of decisions that we make effort is absent; but here effort is the characteristic.

[1] *Principles of Psychology*, vol. ii. p. 535 seq.

In choosing in this latter case between two alternatives, we clearly understand how much we lose in giving up one of them. Probably the strongest motive to action proves to be our intense dislike of continued suspense and the pressing necessity of moving in some direction. For a general to sit still in an enemy's country must be the loss of his good name: to dash forward may be defeat, or it may be triumph. Either is deemed better than inaction: and so his decision is—"Forward; and victory or death!"

The psychology of the will gives us much help in understanding the nature of volition. It shows us that we are not the product of environment or the victims of heredity. And this is in accordance with the testimony of Scripture, which affirms that man is a free personality, is self-determined, and therefore accountable for his deeds.

We have the power of moral choice, and can map out our own life-course. To a certain extent the form in which that choice may be presented will be modified by home, heredity, friends, and education. But yet it is true that "the strong will, like the torrent, can channel its own path": and all biography goes to prove that outside detrimental influences are really powerless to injure unless they are taken up by the mind and held within it as ideas that counteract our action. The poverty which at first hinders the pro-

gress of the poor man's child may be converted into a blessing, when it makes him only the more determined to brave all difficulties and throw his whole energy into the attainment of his chosen life-purpose.

3. The education of the will, therefore, is of the highest importance, and it cannot be too soon begun. In the nursery itself a child makes use of its earliest opportunities to assert its claims and to increase its freedom. Among these undeveloped moral agents we may observe some with a strong energy of self-will, and others in whom will-power is but feebly developed. Children are self-willed simply because they are self-conscious agents; and the force of self-will becomes stronger in proportion as their self-consciousness is more vivid.

Every child who possesses a healthy constitution and a well-toned moral nature is sure to have a vigorous will, in exercising which he will find pleasure, and in the repression of which he will experience pain. If his parents be wise, they will never attempt to crush out that will, *but only to guide it.* Its whole strength is required for the battles of life. The deforcement of a child's will is invariably purchased at the cost of his self-respect; and such a burden should never be laid upon him unless for some grave fault. In education the aim should be to teach the boy how to control his will by a good conscience and

an enlightened judgment. In itself a strong will, divorced from egoism, is a valuable endowment, and brings with it many great possibilities. Like all gifts, it has its dangerous side: it frequently degenerates into egoistic self-will and masterfulness. When dissociated from warm affections, it too often allies itself with personal ambitions. It was exemplified in an extreme degree in Napoleon, who was unequalled for sheer massiveness and force of will. In his constitution there was a deficiency of emotional, probably also of intellectual, sympathy: with much difficulty he seemed to enter into the thoughts and feelings of others. This is one of the most common defects of a strong will. It offends by its inconsiderateness, as it thrusts and elbows its way through the throng of weaker men. Its usefulness is greatly marred by a tendency to immoderate aggressiveness and self-assertion.

The cure of such a deficiency *lies in the cultivation of sympathy*. We should remember the rights of others. In the case of young children, it is well for the teacher to endeavour to cultivate in the strong-willed pupil the faculty of imagination by which he can put himself in the place of his schoolfellows, and learn to feel for them. It is in this manner, and not by repression, that he will gain the victory over a masterful disposition.

4. As every quality is best known in the light of its opposite, so the *fine quality of decision* is set off by contrast with the picture of *the irresolute character*. We have all known an irresolute man, one who is the sport of circumstances, who, unable to shape the current of his life, drifts like seawrack on the ocean, according as the tide of temperament or the passing breeze of fancy may drive him. I do not know a more pitiable picture than that of one who has deliberately formed a rational purpose, has foreseen the good end it would bring about, and who yet from indecision is totally unable to carry it into effect. No sooner has he attempted to accomplish his end, than he is beset with doubts and considerations that frustrate his purpose. Instead of proceeding to action, he begins to ask himself, "What will people say? Have I been too hasty in forming this resolution? Is not the moment inopportune? Might not a little delay smooth away difficulties and prepare the way for final success?" So he concludes that the present time is not opportune for the inception of his plan, and resolves to postpone it for another month; but within a few days he again changes his mind. The old arguments return in force, and he is angry with himself that he should have allowed any apparent dangers or opposition to daunt his courage. His ardour kindles; his spirit revives; he

will brave any opposition that bars his way. His plan is excellent, and he will carry it through, whatever may be the cost. He will never let "I dare not" wait upon "I would."

But anon his enthusiasm cools. The project somehow again seems visionary; friends to whom he has spoken of it criticise and laugh; and the man who yesterday was prepared to cross the ocean in furtherance of his scheme, to-day sits down and counts the wavelets, and shrinks in shame from the enterprise.

What a picture of imbecility, fluctuation, and fickleness! He seems to be two men. Two individuals apparently contend within him. He is both, and he is neither. Seized by the one, held back by the other, he steps forward only to step back again. He belongs not to himself, but to the impulse of the hour. He is the slave of his own temperament, the victim of his own inconstancy. Some malignant influence seems to have smitten the man with powerlessness to abide by any purpose or to continue in one stay.

How dishonouring is such an imbecile state of mind to one made in God's image, and invited to share in all the resources of Divine grace! He who might so well be strong in God's strength is unstable as water, and is perpetually bringing disgrace on the Christian profession. While many a good cause

waits for his help, this weakling is exhausting his energies in a contest with himself. He turns aside like a straw in the eddy of a stream, and falters and fails between the decision and the execution of his purpose.

The worst of it is that a great waste of mental energy and, what is worse, *of moral feeling* has taken place. The protracted anxiety of weary hours and frustrated schemes, the fluctuation between an exalted state of feeling and the reaction of depressed emotion when his resolution has evaporated, all these diminish the vitality of his mind, and lessen the precious store *of ethical enthusiasm* of which no man possesses too much. He has drawn a serious draft on his moral capital; he has been exhausting his spiritual force, weakening his will-power, and making himself the prey of his own inconstancy and indecision. Probably the expenditure of emotion, the pain of a distracted mind and of alternating resolutions, are actually greater than would have been caused by the carrying out of the first resolve. Further, he is deprived of that exhilaration and sense of strength which come to every one who throws himself into work and carries his purpose into successful execution.

Turn now from this picture of imbecility to the man of decision. See how clearly he apprehends

his purpose; how intelligently he conceives it and holds to his conception; how firmly he lays an inhibition on all impulses or fancies that would divert his mind from his intent. With what care does he keep the final end before his view, dwelling upon the desirability of it, and converting the cold mental conception into a motive of activity. He so envisages his ulterior purpose *as to win all his emotions over to its side*, and (so to speak) makes his whole nature fall in love with it. As soon as he has reached conviction he desires to convert it into action. There is no waste of the precious vital power of feeling. All his passion is conserved in the interests of the cause he has at heart. The time which the weak, undecided will gives to alternations of feeling and purpose is with undivided energy devoted to executive work. On solid grounds he has come to the conclusion that the scheme is worthy of his efforts: and why should he stand still and lose his foothold in the quicksands of evanescent feeling? Undue hesitation arises from a weak will or the lack of moral courage; and it is fatal to that promptitude which is so essential to effective action.[1]

There may, of course, be a period of quiet waiting which could not properly be termed inaction. It may be justified by the fact that the right moment

[1] Cf. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*; J. Foster's essay on Decision.

has not yet arrived, that God's clock has not yet struck the hour. But in such a case no one would call this waiting indecision. On the contrary, it is because there has been a wise decision made that the execution of the purpose must be deferred to a certain future time: and as soon as that hour is reached, all embarrassment and hesitation are at end; the delay has only rendered the man the service of an ally by augmenting the force of his resolution to vanquish every difficulty in effecting his purpose.

5. It is not difficult to see what are the elements that go to constitute this excellent quality of decision.

(1) There must first of all be *a clear conception* of the object to be attained. The intellect must be thoroughly convinced before the affections or the will can be reached.

(2) The man of decision is the man who, despite all attractions of another kind, holds fast in the focus of his attention the one idea that he feels ought to prevail and to influence his conduct. *He must never forget that the point of application of the volitional effort is situated in the mind.* Therefore he must take care that the idea do not escape from its position of influence. He will give it ever ampler room, until it fill the mind and crowd all antagonistic ideas unfavourable to decision out of sight.

(3) There must be no consenting to procrastination

when the hour for decisive action arrives. Thought soon stagnates and dies if it do not "mix itself with life." The Christian man will pray for the moral courage that is needed here to help him to launch into action. The coward hesitates, but the brave man puts his hand to the plough.

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood for the good or evil side:
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right;
And the choice goes by for ever 'twixt that darkness and that light.

Then to side with Truth is noble when we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit and 'tis prosperous to be just:
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside,
Doubting in his abject spirit till his Lord is crucified,
And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied."

(From "The Present Crisis," by J. RUSSELL LOWELL.)

The greatest trophy ever man obtained
Is that which in himself himself hath gained.
—Earl of Stirling.

To be self-restrained, self-balanced, governed by the just decision of the feelings in council assembled, that it is which moral education strives to produce.—H. Spencer.

Men, often without knowing why, follow a course for which good reasons exist: the practical instincts work beneficially.—Maudsley.

Still, as of old,
Man by himself is priced:
For thirty pieces Judas sold
Himself,—not Christ.

Ye have need of patience: that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise.—Epistle to Hebrews.

CHAPTER XVI

Qualities of Christian Character

The component qualities of Christian character are too numerous to be discussed within the compass of this volume. In the development of character there is none of the virtues that might be omitted. The perfect man is an embodiment of them all. But the efforts that have been made to describe and classify them have not been satisfactory. A recent writer on Ethics has made the attempt. In a chapter on the Qualities of a Sound Character, he enumerates eighty-four examples of good, and fifty-seven examples of bad qualities. At the close of the chapter he confesses that the list is "not scientific or exhaustive; and probably no two will agree that every quality is placed under its right head."[1]

There are, however, certain salient qualities on which agreement is possible, and which are essential to a Christian character. These are very closely connected with the doctrine of the Will, which has been

[1] Dr. Schofield, *Springs of Character*, chap. ix.

discussed in the previous chapter. We shall not say that they spring out of the will alone, since the examination of the psychological nature of religion shows us clearly that it is at once rational, emotional, and volitional. But there is no doubt that the Christian life begins in the free surrender of the soul to God, and is continued by "doing those things which are pleasing in His sight." The complaint of Christ against the multitude who followed Him was not that they were ignorant or stupid, but that they were not willing to enter His service. "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life."

1. Prompt obedience to the Divine Will. It is a fact, the importance of which cannot be overestimated, that moral and spiritual truths demand instant obedience and are impatient of logical proof. The reason alone, apart from moral preferences, can only estimate a balance of probabilities. Even in this work the intellect has a most important duty to discharge, a duty which we have no wish to undervalue. But in weighing worths the intellect requires the aid of the whole moral nature. As Pascal says, "The heart has reasons of which the head knows nothing." The prodigal finds it convenient for himself to be sceptical in religious matters. Mephistopheles does not love the high demands of Christian duty. When a man decides to surrender himself to the power of Christian

truth and the demands of the Kingdom of God, his whole nature, moral and intellectual, goes to the making of that decision. *In the last resort it is a question of the will.* The Christian faith brings its own verification. Christ dwells in the man who yields his life to be shaped and moulded by Him. There are cases where a truth can never come into our experience and become fact unless a preliminary faith exists in its coming.

If we are to adorn the Christian name and rightly interpret the Christian character, our goodness must be no mere potentiality, *but an energy*; not passive endurance, but voluntary activity. In the language of Aristotle, it is not a δύναμις; it is an ἐνέργεια. As the good friend is not he who can act beneficently, but he who does beneficent deeds; so the good man is he whose goodness shapes itself into virtuous and religious action. The desire to do good, however, may, "by the niggardly provision of a stepmotherly nature," be hindered; in which case we say with Kant, that *the essence of virtue lies in the will.* A good man may be placed in circumstances in which he cannot possibly find scope for his virtues. But even then his virtues will shine through the hard environment.[1] He will mean action, even though he is prevented from accomplishing his purpose. King

[1] Aristotle, *Ethics*, i. 10.

David's longing desire was to build a temple to the glory of God. He was not permitted to do it; yet the will was accepted for the deed. The essence of all religion lies in the obedient will.

Without entering into the difficult investigation of the mysterious way in which, through the feeling of longing for something better or of repentance for sin, the will of man is influenced by the will of God, it is enough to know that God does work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. If we appreciate at its real worth the prevenient grace of God, we determine with an enlightened mind and a quickened conscience to accept the proffered boon. We come to the Saviour and give a gladsome "Yes" to His question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" So that on the very threshold of salvation the question is a moral one, and hinges upon the will. If an accusing conscience find peace in His atoning sacrifice, a responsive will presents itself as the subject of obedience and of sanctifying grace. There may be little joyous emotion; but so long as a believer can say that in his will he is God's, and that he wills to "abide in Him" every moment, he may have an unbroken assurance that he is in a condition of salvation.

In our everyday Christian walk the same principle is in operation in maintaining a lofty level of Christian character. Many Christians live to a large

extent in their feelings. For service and help they are weakly dependent on emotional tides. But in religion we should endeavour to forget such fluxes and refluxes of emotion, and *entrench ourselves within our will.* I do not know of a more brief yet comprehensive statement of the action of the Christian life than that given by St. Paul, "doing the will of God from the heart." It teaches us that a man can never fulfil the great end of his life outside God's loving purpose towards him as an individual. In doing that will with sympathy and readiness, he attains the end for which his Creator gave him birth. He is obedient to the all-comprehending command, "Be ye holy, as I am holy."

It has been well said that *holiness is a habit of will.* The only coherent and continuous line in our Christian life is the line of faith and holy obedience. The sins of a Christian man are his shame; but they are scattered, sporadic outbursts, bending the line but not burying it out of sight or breaking it. The bent of the will is Godward. The prevailing habit of life is the aim to be like Jesus Christ. That habit may be interrupted by stumbling into evil; but the basis of character remains through the repentance that surely follows. And all genuine repentance is but a resuming of the habit which a temporary folly interrupted.

Our religion is but a poor affair if it be used merely as an anodyne to soothe our feelings. God's forgiveness is only a means to a further end, and that end is "doing the will of God from the heart." All the consolations and hopes of Christianity are subservient to the one grand purpose of enabling us to say, "I delight to do Thy will, O God; yea, Thy law is within my heart." If our religion do not reach the level attained by such saints as walked with God in obedience, we have not yet grasped its meaning. The river of life proceeding from the throne comes not merely to water the dry desert of feeling, but to drive the wheels of duty. Action, not emotion, is the end of the Divine revelation. Thought and feeling have their rightful place as stimulants and incitements to doing the will of God.

We must also emphasise the fact that it is the *doing*, and not merely the *endurance*, of God's will that is to distinguish the Christian character. We know well how in the Christian economy pain is disciplinary: how, as it draws the sufferer nearer to God, it educes faith and quickens the growth of the graces of meekness and patience. But when it is God's will that the education of our character should be carried on along some Via Dolorosa, we must learn *to do* that will and not merely *to bear it*. Not in the spirit of magnanimous Stoicism, but with the desire

to gladly obey the Divine commands, shall we lift the cup of sorrow to our lips and drink it with unmurmuring spirit.

That man has made but little progress in the Christian life who is content to assume a merely *passive* attitude to the Divine will. Yet in the language of devout people we hear much about "bearing God's will" and little about doing it. I am afraid this is a distinction drawn by the less manly spirit of modern days in order to excuse our selfishness. It is unknown to the writers of the New Testament. In His Passion, our Lord, far from representing Himself as a mere victim, joyfully entered into the Father's purpose, and set His face steadfastly to the predestined end. His meat was "to do the will of Him that sent Him."

This doing of God's will continually, this reducing of religious obedience to a habit, *issues in the highest type of Christian character.* He who has come to be of one mind with God may ask what he will and it shall be done unto him. The human will, in unison with the Divine, becomes the conductor of the current of power. The grandest manifestations of spiritual force, which have awakened communities and revived Churches and brought Pentecosts to many peoples, have always reached men through the medium of those whose will has

been magnetised and made one with the perfect will of God.

A Christian man is most truly himself in those highest and best moments of his life. He is a vessel meet for the Master's use. Through him the current of the Divine will finds a perfect medium. At such times he comes nearest to the point of inspiration. If we wish to get the assurance of the Christian life, we must not only with our mind grasp the proof of Christianity and walk by faith, but we must also do God's will in daily acts, and bring our life under the great exactions and obligations of His Kingdom. Many deep problems are solved in action. "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine."

2. Constancy. Closely connected with the Will also is that fine quality of character called Constancy. This is the virtue of perseverance in duty, however unpleasant the duty may be. It is impossible to build up character without it. He who is unstable as water can never excel. The strong student is the *homo unius libri*; and the strong man is he who ever keeps in view life's great end, and who to the accomplishment of that end devotes all his energies.

The man of feeble or of intermittent will never rises to the height of his possibilities: too often he falls ridiculously below it. The impairment of his purpose probably arises from defect of energetic impulse. He

may be one of those easy-minded persons who, in order to act efficiently, require to be urged to the performance of duty by a stronger will. He is convinced of his obligation and means to perform it; but his will is stricken with impotence. A strange paralysis seems to be laid upon his action; and so his character bears the stamp of instability.

Or, on the other hand, he may be the creature of sudden impulses. The intellectual adaptation is weak; and while rational motives are powerless to inhibit, the impulses of appetite or emotion are strong. Such a man is always "running against a wall." No sooner does an idea get possession of him than he hastens to put it into execution. The possession amounts to a fixed idea, and carries the man to the borders of insanity. No doubt persons of a healthy mind do occasionally feel these foolish impulses; but they are restrained by the general habit of the moral constitution. In a man of common sense there is hardly even a struggle. Sudden impulses he treats as whims or fantasies, and abides by his good judgment.

To acquire this fine virtue of the strong-willed character we must have steadfast affections, that cleave with unalterable decisiveness to what is good. A true faith is a force that acts continuously, and is not a mere intermittent impulse. The life thus reinforced is equable and uniform, free from broken

vows and unrealised intentions. It puts to shame those lives in which periods of growth and activity are succeeded by dreary wastes of torpidity and inaction, in which the points of brightness stand far apart, like the lamps in some ill-lighted city suburb, when they should form one continuous line of light.

Against such constancy distracting influences are ever at work. Our duties demand the exercise of our undivided energies, and it is not easy to keep the mind intent on its purpose. All emotions suffer reactions, and hours of transfiguration are followed by dull days of depressing care. But we must not be the creatures of our feelings. *We are not what we feel, but what we will.* Down beneath the alluvial deposits of feeling and the strata of thought we must go till we reach the granite of the will.

The song and the rapture of our religious life may for a time go out of it; but if we are constant in our resolve to abide in the will of God, in the centre of our being we are His. And very soon the reaction will end, and every thought and feeling will be brought captive into obedience to Christ. When the will is constant the whole being is in unity.

The light of contrast is one of the lights of life; and nowhere does constancy reflect its native beauty so much as when placed in the vicinity of an unstable nature. Instability, inconstancy, is the bane of

religion, and the cause of many a sorrow to a pastor. It is denounced by the patriarch Jacob as a sad flaw in the character of Reuben: it is accentuated by St. James as a cause of failure in prayer not less than in practice. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." Hermas, the Christian Father of the second century, is continually referring to this source of weakness in the character of the Church members of his day. In the ninth chapter of the Book of Commands, a book written at a period immediately following the Apostolic Age, we find these counsels: "Put away from thee all double-mindedness, and have no more division of heart concerning petitions from God. Of all thy petitions thou shalt not fail of one if thou ask with unhesitating heart. But if thou doubtest in thy mind, thou shalt receive none; for they who are doubtful toward God, are double-souled men; and a double-souled man will scarcely be saved, unless he repent. Cleanse, therefore, thy heart from all double-mindedness and put on Faith, for she is mighty." Hermas clearly saw how this fickleness injured the spirit that alone can offer the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man; and how the waverer, drifting with the tide, can build no stable purpose of life on the fluctuating waves of inconstancy.

3. Allied to Constancy is another beautiful quality

of the Christian character, Consistency. To be constant is to continue going on; to be consistent is to continue going on in the same way. The one points to endurance and continuity in well-doing; the other indicates the unity which binds all the acts of life into harmonious wholeness. Consistency is the harmony of character. No man ever wove sweet thoughts into such rhythmic verse as could vie in beauty with the melodious poem of a consistent life. We cannot all compose songs or hymns which shall be as angels of comfort to weary men. To only a very few in a century is given the poet's genius. But we may all be creators of a consistent character. We may write upon that staff the notes of a well-strung life out of which shall come no jarring discord, no bitterness or strife. A consistent life keyed into harmony with the spirit of Christ yields the most exquisite music.

"We are but organs mute till the Master touches the keys,
Verily vessels of earth into which God poureth the wine;
Harps are we, silent harps, that have hung on the willow trees,
Dumb till our heartstrings swell and break with a pulse Divine."

A character in which all the parts are bound together by right intentions and welded by a dominating life-purpose, is one of great strength and power. *To tenacity of purpose*, which is constancy,

it adds tenacity of plan, which is consistency. It proposes to itself the goal of goodness. It throws aside all false exaggerations and defects; it turns neither to the right hand nor to the left, permitting no deviation from principle and no diversion from righteous conduct.

How prominent is this feature in the life of Jesus! As we study that life, do we not honestly feel that it possesses no evidence of its divinity more sublime and commanding than its holy consistency? Facing a whole generation of critics, He could say, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" He challenged the judgment of His age upon the consistency of His life. From its beginning to its close there was no divergence of purpose, no change of plan. There were therefore no waste of time and no unnecessary expenditure of emotion. All His life was welded into unity, and He could say at its close, "I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." Through infancy, youth, and manhood His character remained flawless: it was without variableness or shadow of turning.

Well had it been for the cause of Christianity had this same quality distinguished all Christ's disciples! But the history of the Church teems with proofs of *inconsistency*. A St. Peter, the supposed rock of the Church's creed, shamed his name. The Church of

Pentecost had its Ananias ; the Epistles of St. Paul are full of lamentations over inconsistencies in the Church of the Apostolic Age. The Christianity of to-day is terribly maimed by cruel judgments, by idle words, by acts and intentions that belie its profession and compromise its good name. It were well for us all if we realised that inconsistency spells *impotence*; that a character out of harmony with the mind of the Master is one that the world laughs at, disowns, and regards only as an evidence of the insincerity of all religion. The injury done by inconsistent lives cannot be estimated. Every such life is a page in a volume of anti-Christian evidences which is carefully pondered by the unbelieving world. Whether the inconsistency arise from arrested development or from conscious hypocrisy, it is equally repugnant and offensive to all right-minded men.

The supreme desire of the Christian disciple should be that his life be *a consistent whole* and not a fragment, a column and not a torso. To be a man of influence, he does not need to be clever or rich; but he must be consistent. His principles must harmonise with his professions; his life and his lips must give one testimony. Jarring dissonances will then give place to pleasing harmonies. And a sense of proportion, "of the littleness of time and the vastness of eternity," will control his esti-

mate of things. Thus, as Charles Kingsley said, he will

> "Do noble things, not dream them, all day long;
> And so make Life, Death, and the great For Ever
> One grand sweet song."

4. There remains another outstanding quality of Christian character, Simplicity. It was portrayed by Jesus when He spoke of the single eye that filled the whole body with light, and when He described Nathanael as "an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile." It is a well-known and a very beautiful type of character. It is often allied with genius, which has a wonderfully striking way of setting great truths in simple language, and of living a plain, unadorned, simple life. Far removed from childishness, it has all the attractiveness of childlikeness. The former is a weakness; but the latter is morally beautiful, and possesses many elements of strength.

On the other hand, this quality may exist apart from genius or cleverness, and may be found "along the cool sequestered vale of life," pursuing an even tenor and a truthful consistency. The character of John Howard, the philanthropist, was marked by simplicity no less than by decision. We have met it in many a humble artisan and honest farmer, whose straightforwardness and guileless innocence carry all

the attractive buoyancy of youth into the maturity of age. They retain that fresh way of looking at everything which characterises the schoolboy. Nature never becomes stale to such. Their sentiment of wonder never dies. The *blasé* tone of modern society is removed from theirs by whole horizons. They have nothing in common with the unveracities and the littlenesses of conventionality. The canons of fashion they cannot endure. A great simple soul like Robert Burns unconsciously breaks through all such laws as so many figments of the imagination. The honest man, who is "king o' men," is the man who manifests this type of character. He is a man of deep sincerity, of sterling veracity, without the least grain of pretence, and whose soul receives and reflects truth as a lake receives and reflects the sunbeams. His simplicity is his strength; in all temptation it is his best defence.

"How happy is he born or taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill!

Who God doth late and early pray
More of His grace than gifts to lend,
And entertains the harmless day
With a religious book or friend."[1]

[1] Sir Henry Wotton, *A Happy Life*.

The opposite of this type of character is one very repugnant to the moral taste. If there be a quality that is hateful to the English mind, it is that of sinuosity. The essence of that vice is doubleness: it has two faces, one for friends and another for foes. And doubleness is only one step removed from duplicity. It is an attempt to be two men at one and the same time; it is to have two ends, and to be under the influence of two contradictory motives. It may succeed in deceiving itself, but never deceives others. It is the antithesis of that singleness of purpose which is man's glory. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness."

There is no quality that one values more in a friend than sincerity. We can forgive anything to those who will break through the crust of mere ceremony and will speak plain and simple truth. In religion nothing is so powerful as reality. Mere ceremony is tiresome and unsatisfying; and simple hearts who crave for reality turn away from rubric and ritual to Jesus' definition of acceptable worship, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." In Christian life, conduct has but one canon, fashion has but one model, life

has one all-embracing law, that of Christian simplicity, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

In the beautiful incident of the Bethany home, where Jesus meets with the two sisters, we find an illustration of the law of Simplicity in a marginal reading: "Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; *but few things are needful, or one.*"[1] It is as if Jesus had said to Martha, "In your ministrations to Me you have forgot that the great needs of life are the common needs, and that all the ministries of love are common ministries of home and friendship, of birth, and bridal, and death. The real requirements of life are few; nay, *they are but one*, and the test of a true life is rather what it can do without than what it can attach to itself." In these days, when society has created many fanciful necessities and multiplied artificial needs until only highly spiced festivities give delight, we must learn to go back to the simple life and to cultivate simplicity of taste. Joined to Christ in abiding union, we have found the one thing needful for life. There are a thousand *centrifugal* influences which would remove us from our blessedness and keep us in strife with it. But if this one *centripetal* influence is ours we may easily deal with the most adverse environment, and may do

[1] Luke x. 41, margin of Revised Version.

without the thousand and one things that seem so large to little souls.

The test of a Christian is, *What can he do without?* Can he do without money, and yet retain manhood? Can he do without place, pomp, and a crowd of friends, and yet feel that he has lost little, if God abides? Can he say, "Neither life, nor death, nor any other creature shall separate me from the love of Jesus Christ"? That love is the one essential element in life. From all else we may be separate; we can do without them and yet feel that life has not been belittled, but only disencumbered of some needless appendages.

We need not say how far we are from decrying culture, refinement, comfort, recreation. But the sources of life's happiness are found in very simple forms. The joy of the botanist, the antiquarian, the painter, the astronomer, can be ours for a trifle. The beauty of the world is best reached by an open eye, a responsive heart, and an ingenuous mind. Simplicity of character never runs after artificial forms of pleasure which only titillate the senses and bring restlessness, ennui, and satiety; it is content with the healthy, natural diversions of life. The grandest life that ever was lived was spent in the low estate of poverty. Jesus wore a peasant's dress, slept on the mountain side, and was greatest in all the genuine

elements of humanity. And all this to teach us that a noble spirit is far greater than its mean surroundings, and that the test of a great life is found in how much it can want, and yet be simple and true to itself. The whole of that perfect life was lived under the great law of simplicity.

Nothing is more detestable in one who claims to be a Christian than the practice of social deceptions. All outward semblances which are false soon work themselves inward and eventually create artificiality. Pretence and sophistry honeycomb the character and prepare for a downfall. A man's first duty to himself is to be sincere, to mean what he says, and to say what he means. Insincerity undermines every virtue, and its inward reaction is altogether evil. *Truthfulness is simplicity in character and sincerity in motive.*

The highest range of duties may be undertaken and fulfilled only by him whose religion is a reality, and whose life is ever lived under the great law of Christian Simplicity.

THE POWER OF HABIT

How use doth breed a habit in a man!

—SHAKESPEARE.

Whose adorning, let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing jewels of gold or of putting on apparel: but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.—ST. PETER.

There is an art of right living.

—ARTHUR HELPS.

Small habits well pursued betimes
May reach the dignity of crimes.

—HANNAH MORE.

Sow an act and you reap a habit: sow a habit and you reap a character: sow a character and you reap a destiny.

—THACKERAY.

. . . Weariness
Can snore upon the flint, when resty sloth
Finds the down pillow hard.

—SHAKESPEARE.

CHAPTER XVII

The Power of Habit

We come now to the vital point, the question of power. Self-control on the negative side and culture on the positive side are excellent means of developing character. But the reader may still ask, Where am I to find the power by which I can overcome those evil tendencies that keep me back from culture and befool me in all my attempts at self-control? I see the ideal good; but I am conscious that I have not strength of purpose to realise that ideal. What am I to do?

This brings us, at the close of our treatment of the subject of Christian Character, to the vital issue. Can we realise this ideal by natural means, by free self-development, by the innate powers and gifts of nature? We believe that this is impossible, and therefore we have written these closing chapters.

The query introduces us to *the contrast between Nature and Grace*, the deepest anomaly in life. In its essential form and for moral life it is the anomaly

between freedom and grace: one idea of freedom being that all self-determination is independent of gracious help, and that man can attain his destiny by means of effort and self-culture alone.

This view ignores the fact that the essence of man's being is God's image in him. It forgets that human liberty is enjoyed rightly only when it is directed according to the will of God. Do we then possess the glorious gift of freedom only in idea, while our actual liberty is inadequate for true self-government? Was St. Paul right when he said, "I delight in the law of God after the inner man. But I find a different law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members"? Yes! every man who knows himself endorses the verdict of the apostle. But it is only when the sense of this powerlessness of the will to fulfil the law of righteousness takes possession of our conscience that we turn to God with the cry, "Who shall deliver me?" Then we feel that *we must get a new dynamic of duty*: a power from on high must come to our help. What is this power?

Here we meet with a wide divergence of thought among those who devote their attention to moral and spiritual training. There are *two methods* of moral culture which are not inconsistent with one another, which, in fact, co-operate in every life that exhibits

ethical progress, yet on which a very different emphasis is laid by different teachers. The one method is by the cultivation of *good habits*: the other is by divinely provided *spiritual force*. The former is estimated highly by the psychologist, who sees how habit becomes a second nature, and in course of time comes to control physical and mental powers. The latter is appealed to by religious teachers, who know how wooden the life of habit may become, and how difficult it is in the case of the abandoned and vicious to get any leverage with which to make a start. Christian Ethics has much to say regarding this moral dynamic.

But it is not wise to place these methods in opposition to each other. *Each has its use*, and we cannot pass by the need of either. If it is the fundamental principle of all living structure that by repetition it very soon shapes itself into congenial modes of action and thought, then it is of the highest importance that we should make habit a friend to virtue, and call to our aid its powerful organisation.

On the other hand, since habit tends so much to run into rigidity, producing a type of character neither admirable nor influential, we must regard it as only *the second best*. By the way in which it eases the attention it tends to blunt the edge of sensibility; and it may end by even darkening the intelligence

and stilling the voice of conscience. Therefore, in addition to the power of habit, we must have recourse *to Divine grace*, that great spiritual force at first bestowed upon the Church in the charisma of Pentecost. The truth of the indwelling Spirit stands in the forefront of scriptural teaching; it has entered into all living Christian experience, and become a fact of Christian consciousness. We shall discuss it fully in the closing chapter.

This question of moral power puzzled the mind of Aristotle himself. No man could more skilfully legislate for an ideal state in which men are treated in the mass. But *how was he to reach the individuals* that composed the mass? As for himself with cultured mind and trained eye, he affirmed that a powerful lever to lift up the soul might be found in an appeal to the moral beauty and fitness of virtue. But the great majority of men were incapable of appreciating such influences; and we are never moved by what we do not value. Besides, such an æsthetic taste, even if it were possessed by us, would not be a force superior to our native passions and appetites. It would at the best be but one among many motives, each having the same authority as itself. Therefore the only moral power with which Aristotle was acquainted, sufficient to cope with the passions, was that *of habit*. Accordingly he teaches that virtue

is a habit, and he lays more emphasis on the formation of good habits than on the presence of good desires or of a good will.

Socrates had maintained that virtue is knowledge and that vice is error; and that if men only had a clear grasp of the true nature of the moral end, they would inevitably pursue it. But Aristotle knew that we may see the good and yet altogether fail to pursue it, that the motive to action is not always rational, and that dominant desires may prove too strong for reason. Hence he fell back on the power of habit. He affirmed that virtue is a habit, and that the virtuous man is he who lives habitually in the discharge of his duty. It was the supreme merit of Aristotle that he saw this, and that he further perceived that in a well-developed character habit must be accompanied by sound practical judgment.

I. We are each born into a certain environment, and we possess tendencies acquired by heredity from our parents. We must either master these or be mastered by them. If we lack the power of self-government, these tendencies will grow into evil habits of which we become the slaves. They have captured us, and keep us imprisoned in their chains.

But this law of habit has also *a gracious side.* It enables us to master these impulses, and train them to such obedience that they may help us to realise

the true end of life. For habit is the law by which repetition of an action produces pleasure in doing it. And when the act is repeated at regular intervals, facility is also acquired, along with the inclination to repeat the act. In skating or swimming, in committing poetry to memory, in reading an elocution lesson, regular practice gives both pleasure in the repetition and facility in the performance. It is not otherwise in moral habits. Persistence in truth-speaking will make it easy to abide by facts and to shun all exaggeration. The good habit becomes a second nature; and it would be difficult for one so trained to colour a narrative or to equivocate.

It must be remembered that habits are a repetition of psychical states, carrying with them, however, very marked physiological concomitants. They are really due *to pathways of discharge* through the nerve centres, gradually creating (as Professor James calls it) "a beaten track" along which the currents more and more tend to flow. It is this which explains the process by which good habit becomes second nature and facility is acquired in action.

Further, as the habit grows in strength, the *pleasure* attending the facility grows less obtrusive, and the habit tends to become *automatic*. "Where the habit is sufficiently formed to subserve its purpose, consciousness retires from the scene, like an artist whose

work is done."[1] The acquisition of moral habits is greatly helped when the *bent* of the learner is towards this acquirement. If a pupil's inherited tendency is to diligence and study, it is easy to gain the good habits of attention and method.

These being the characteristics of habit, we can easily perceive the *advantages* of it. The tasks which previously required effort and much self-restraint are now easily performed. The essay it was once so difficult to compose is now dashed off at a single sitting. The moral duty which we hardly dared to face now costs only the slightest determination of will. The minimum of attention and of effort is required. Here is effected a great saving, which permits of *fresh moral victories* being made. By handing over to this custodian all details, we liberate our energies and get time to attack new duties.

II. The *rules* of habit are simple; and on these psychologists are practically agreed. 1. Make the start not gradually, but with a *strong initiative*. Cross the Rubicon boldly, and burn the bridge behind you. 2. All the more, if you are emerging from a bad into a good habit, commit yourself *with the whole force of your will and the full flood of your emotion* to the new course. For reactions will come; and your resolution

[1] Stout, *Analytic Psych.* i. 265; cf. Bastian, *Brain as an Organ of Mind*, p. 523.

will require the whole benefit of this self-commitment to prevent you turning back. 3. Remember the value of ἄσκησις, and *accustom yourself to daily discipline* in the good habit. In these days, when nearly all ethical exhortations are anti-ascetic, let us not forget the value that lies in self-denial. 4. *Begin at the earliest possible moment,* and try if possible never to be guilty of a *single lapse.*[1] Remember that a single defeat gives the enemy a strong vantage-ground, and also breaks in upon the moral tradition which you have been creating for yourself. 5. Put yourself *in the best possible environment.* A drunkard forming habits of temperance should live amongst those who wholly abstain from that which has proved the cause of his terrible weakness. If injurious surroundings cannot be changed, the effort of resistance will be greatly increased. "Nothing exerts so great an influence on the psychical organism as the moral atmosphere breathed by it."[2]

III. *The Barriers of Habit.*—Habits may become barriers to progress, if we never permit ourselves to act outside their fixed limits. It is very easy for the moral nature to degenerate into effortless routine: and when a man has become, in Paley's words, simply a bundle of habits, *the hard mechanism of habit,* like

[1] Bain, *The Will,* chap. ix.

[2] W. B. Carpenter, *Mental Physiology,* p. 353.

Saul's armour to the youthful David, tends to become more a hindrance than a help.

1. We do not speak of bad habits, which very soon bind their victims with the iron chains of a terrible bondage. But even good habits have their drawbacks: for they may by facilitating action lead us to leave intelligence and conscience out of our work. The extreme division of labour in these times tends to create "hands" rather than workmen. When a doctor of medicine falls into mere professionalism, his higher nature gets buried in the details of his duty, and habit decreases the power to meet new emergencies in dealing with disease. But as soon as the intellectual factor is banished from work, our moral education is at an end. Ethical progress is then impossible. Hence great care must be exercised lest the beneficent side of habit be abused, and that which was intended to economise attention and liberate the mind for new duties be turned into a fateful foe. How may this be prevented? *By the "rehabituation of habit."* Habit must learn to adjust itself to new conditions and to the rapidly changing circumstances that are continually meeting us in the social economy. This requires the exercise of good sense and of the practical wisdom so commended by Aristotle.[1] Habits are the conservative forces of life:

[1] *Ethics*, Book VI. chaps. v., viii., and xii.

and they may prove only a life in death unless they learn to rehabituate themselves to meet those emerging problems that use and wont cannot solve.

2. There is another limit to the usefulness of habit. In a singular way it may induce *insensibility*. This result arises from the fact that habit tends to blunt the edge of feeling, and that while practical habits are strengthened by repetition, passive impressions connected with them grow weaker. Our aptitude for work is increased; but if the emotion does not work itself out into action, and we are passive under the impression, *repetition deadens the emotion*, and it passes into insensibility. Weak, sentimental phrases may remain upon the lip; but the heart of true benevolence has been eaten out. The surest way to petrify the moral nature is to stimulate the feelings and give them nothing to do. Hypocrisy, sentimentalism, and every affectation and falsity follow the steps of an emotional religion which divorces itself from active work. Every time our compassion is stirred, and yet no action ensues, our moral nature is indurated, and our sincerity in some degree impaired.

Everyone knows that the regular theatre-goer, who yields himself to mere emotion and revels in it, grows less and less inclined to active work in the service of

the distressed, whose tragic sufferings he sees enacted on the stage. On the other hand, the city missionary, the pastor, and the surgeon, who are every day training themselves to do kind acts of relief whenever their emotion or pity is kindled, while suffering a certain daily diminution in the keenness of their feeling, are strengthening the practical habit of benevolence. If there be on one side a loss, on the other side there is gain. If the good doctor or kind deaconess have their sensibilities to suffering to some extent blunted, they receive a rich compensation in the acquisition of prompt response to the call of a suffering humanity.

3. Another danger arises here, and that of a much more serious nature. It is the tendency which habit possesses to produce *a hard and wooden type of character*, a "slavery of routine in morals."[1] Such a type of character proves very weak in the emergencies of real life. When men have come to act simply by the mechanism of habit devoid of thought and emotion, they may be said to have degenerated from men into machines, and to have made all moral progress in themselves impossible.

(*a*) This introduces us to a very important distinction which is fundamental in Christian Ethics. There

[1] Cf. Prof. W. L. Davidson, *Theism*, p. 334; Prof. MacCunn, *Making of Character*, p. 48.

are some moralists who would make character nothing more than the sum-total of habits. Yet such character would be devoid of everything spiritual, and would yield only the most rigid and lifeless type. But character is more than the result of habits. Habits do not make me: I am more than them, as my mind is more than my thoughts. No doubt character is developed by habit, but at the same time character remains something more than that out of which it has come. It is not the mere sum of isolated qualities: it is an organic whole, a "noetic synthesis."[1] According to Christian Ethics, so far is habit from creating character, that Christian character is made by the regenerating power of the grace of God; and from this higher point of view it must be regarded as producing all good habits. In many lives habit would never get a start at all without this regenerating spiritual force.[2]

(*b*) It must never be forgotten that in order to have ethical quality all good habit must be a habit of will. If habit is only the natural disposition of an agent in one direction, so that with him a certain class of motives prevail, such habit of motive is not necessarily bad. A choleric temperament naturally favours habits of activity. But such activity may develop

[1] Stout, *Analytic Psych.*, vol. i. chap. vi.

[2] See next chapter.

into fussiness; or, on the other hand, it may naturally manifest itself in an active life. One so endowed cannot help being active. Yet such goodness as is gained accidentally and without a struggle, or through mere ignorance of evil, lacks the essential property of moral goodness. Moral habits are produced by the will from within outwards, that is, by the moral agent himself. Strictly speaking, no human action can be called good in itself; it acquires moral predicates only in virtue of the deliberate choice of the agent.[1] "There is nothing in the world which can be termed absolutely and altogether good, a good will alone excepted" (Kant). Therefore only will-created habits are to be reckoned of worth.

(*c*) But here a difficulty faces us. No sooner is habit thoroughly formed than fixity ensues and freedom seems to vanish. Habit has now become our second nature; it is a pleasure to comply with it and a pain to inhibit it. It has become like an instinct or hereditary habit, and is a source of gratification as we follow the newly acquired proclivity. Can we therefore call its work *ethical*? If that deliberate choice of alternatives which distinguishes acts of the will is no longer felt, but we move within the sure circle of habit, *where is freedom*? Have we not given

[1] Aristotle's *Ethics*, ii. 6, 15: "Virtue then is a habit of choice."

our moral nature over to bondage under a new name?

There is here a great antinomy. Freedom and habit are at enmity. And so long as we remain within the domain of pure ethics, the problem is one that cannot be solved. The will must be free; and yet in the exercise of its freedom it must fetter itself by the formation of habits. Thus as moral character develops, *morality seems to expire in the mechanism of habit.* Habit creeps up around character, like ivy round an oak, and with its iron bands it extinguishes the life of the tree which it was meant to adorn. It weaves itself through the fibre of the moral nature until "it has it" (*habet*). But the result is to stiffen it into a stony structure, as cement sets and hardens all it holds into stone. The elasticity of character is lost; it gives place to an unlovely rigidity, which is rather mechanical than moral.

It is true Professor Huxley looked upon this as a by no means to be despised attainment; and with the courage of his convictions he said that, if he knew of any means by which he might be wound up like a clock, with the certainty that he would always keep time to his engagements and strike at the hour, he would agree to be so set agoing. It seems to us that this is to repeat the mistake made by Professor Drummond in his *Natural Law in the*

Spiritual World, in which he identified natural and spiritual laws. There is analogy but not identity between different departments of nature. If identity be assumed, and the laws of morality be made one with the laws of matter, we fall into the hardest possible spiritual mechanics; that is, we land in absurdity.

But if by the growth of habit character loses all possibility of progress, and thus is *felo de se*, we have an antinomy of the most serious kind. Natural Ethics finds the problem insoluble. The truth is that no solution is possible but by an extension of the purely scientific view of the facts so as to include their religious aspect. Ethics must here borrow from Christian Ethics; morality must go for help to religion. And it will not go in vain. For if freedom and habit are at enmity, certainly freedom and grace are in perfect alliance.

The Christian religion recognises and enforces progress in morality. Where the Spirit is there is liberty and not bondage, progress and not finality. Habit is invariably regarded as possessing the same moral significance as an act which is the result of deliberate choice. The Christian habit of virtue, the habitually virtuous Christian life, is not bondage to law, but rather the embodiment of freedom. A living faith in Christ transforms the law of love into the

love of law. Christ masters the Christian man; and the rule of love is gladsome liberty.

(*d*) Freedom is a necessary attribute of will; yet, as we have seen, it cannot coexist with that subjection to habit which follows the exercise of will, at least if the standard be, as it must be for pure ethics, simply a dead law. But in religion the ideal standard of Christian conduct is not a dead law, but the living will of God. The type of all moral and religious habit is the yielding of self to become the instrument of the Divine Will. "Present your members as servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Rom. vi. 19). This surrender is not forced, but voluntary. We determine that God's will shall be ours; and this frame of mind becomes habitual. *Holiness is just the habit of doing God's will.* But the characteristic of this habit is not bondage. For though I have formed a habit of holiness, yet my acts retain their ethical quality. My will disappears only to reappear as God's will in mine. "I lay down my life, that I may take it again."

Therefore this habit of holiness retains moral quality while continuing to be a habit. And it permits growth of character and development of new and particular habits; for the will of God is infinite, and in the process of realising my Christian self in

this infinite whole, life becomes fuller and broader. "We die to live." This is the supreme mystery of Christian Ethics. Self is developed and enriched through unselfishness.

The spiritual power by which this is accomplished we shall study more fully in the following chapter.

The inmost breathing of the devout heart is, "Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I."—PRINCIPAL SHAIRP.

Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.
—ST. PAUL.

. . . thou shalt know ere long,
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong.
—LONGFELLOW.

Strong by weakness, wiser men become,
As they draw near to their eternal home.
—EDMUND WALLER.

For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are those, "It might have been."
—J. G. WHITTIER.

They go from strength to strength; every one of them appeareth before God in Zion.—SONS OF KORAH.

The sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
Is, the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
Though the end in view was a vice, I say.
—BROWNING.

Who can change the desires of man?
—MARCUS AURELIUS.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Spiritual Power

The greatest moral question in connection with character is the question of power. I see the true end of life; but how am I to realise it? I have got a keen vision of the beauty of a cultured nature; but where is the power by which I shall conquer indolence, and attain to this culture? My mind apprehends the truths of the Christian Creed; but by what moral means can these verities be transfused into the fire and energy of a Christian soul? How shall I get a motive power to enable me to convert the practical precepts of Christianity into ethical products?

The need of such power is universally admitted. If St. Paul desired it for the Church of Corinth because its divisions and party-spirit had weakened it, our broken ranks in these days accentuate the necessity for such help. The icy breath of doubt is blowing over all our Churches. Wherever it reaches, men begin to exalt their shibboleths because they have lowered their creeds. Lips that once spoke

with unfaltering accents now mutter languidly their perplexing doubts. The spokesman for Christ recoils baffled; the rod of his strength is broken in his hand. His speech is no longer "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

Everywhere to-day in Conferences and Synods men are asking as to the cause of the Church's weakness. They have felt the adverse influences of the trinity of evil—the world, the flesh, and the devil. The downward pull of pleasure, the blatant voice of Scepticism, the deadweight of dulness and callousness, are keeping men back from Christ and injuring Christian character. Cannot the Church point them to some source of moral power equivalent to their needs?

The most attractive side in the study of character is the *dynamical side*. Psychologists have dug through all the layers of consciousness and brought into the clear light of day many facts that had lain concealed. But though in this way they have enriched our modern literature with new wealth of mental and moral contents, they have presented us with only a statical view of our personality. It is possible to dissect human nature and appropriately label all its separate parts without pointing out the principle of life. But from an ethical point of view man is one of the moral forces of creation. He is a

centre of good or of evil among a multitude of moral forces.

Man's nature is the arena on which mighty forces are contending for the victory. It was so with our Incarnate Lord, who triumphed over these principalities and powers on His Cross; and it is not otherwise with His disciples. Humanity is the battlefield where these forces of ill and of good contend; and it is this contest of powers that gives to the study of history and of character its fine fascination. This it is which makes Biography so instructive, and the delineations of character in modern fiction so full of interest. The working out of the plot is less fascinating to our mind than is the evolution of character.

There are three questions with which morality must concern itself. The first is, What is it which constitutes the virtuous character that commends itself to all good men? The second, What is the guide of human conduct? Is it reason or conscience, a sense of prudence or a sense of duty? How shall we shape our being so as to make a perfect life?[1] But Christian moralists cannot stop there; they at least must go on to ask a third question, Where shall we find a force that will make us respond to the commands of conscience? Where

[1] Shairp, *Studies in Poetry and Philosophy*, p. 372.

discover an ethical power strong enough to drive all the wheels of duty? The question of a moral dynamic is the most profound of all questions concerning character; and Christian Ethics must not ignore it.

It is very instructive for us to observe what great minds have thought about this subject. Among the Greeks, where the human intellect attained to great development and to lofty notions of virtue, their wisest thinker, Socrates, approached, though he never actually dealt with, this question. "Virtue is knowledge," he said; and it is certainly true that correct insight into life's meaning and end helps us to live better. His pupil, Plato, longed to put his finger on the place of power, and thought he found it in the right harmony of the three elements of the soul—desire, passion, and intellect. But the balance of elements is not power; it is statical, not dynamical. Aristotle, the practical man, might be expected to face this subject; and accordingly he opposes the Socratic view of virtue as knowledge. He affirms that virtue is well-doing; the virtuous character is built up by repeated choices of the right course of action, the golden mean between two extremes. In course of time these acts will grow into a habit of action; and in habits lie our protection from impulsive passions. "As men come to be harp players

by playing on the harp; exactly so by doing just actions we come to be just."[1] Habit is the fulcrum on which Aristotle would rest the lever and would purchase moral power.

A lever gives enormous purchase when its fulcrum is adequate to its support. But good habits are only formed by slow and gradual stages and after much moral effort. How then can habit lift up the thoroughly bad? Here is the crux of the question. Virtuous habits are formed by the performance of many virtuous actions; but how can a man, held in the chains of vice, *begin* the performance of these? The philosopher had no answer to this query. Aristotle proclaimed no gospel of deliverance to the reprobates and prodigals. He called the righteous, not sinners, to repentance. His panacea is for the "high-souled" man. As for the masses, he would employ the force of the State to compel them to virtue. But practically he despairs of them. Greek philosophers left the majority of the nation to their own fate, and limited their hope to those who were born into a virtuous heritage, the moral aristocracy of the nation.

In modern times we find philosophy in the main divided into two camps, the Intuitionalist and the Utilitarian. What have they to tell of the moral

[1] Nicom., *Ethics*, Book II. chap. i.

motive power? Of the former school perhaps we may take the philosopher of Königsberg as the type. The genius of Germany, which in the end of the eighteenth century awoke in Kant, gave to thought one of the most original and far-reaching impulses it has ever received. Even still we feel its effects in history, science, and theology not less than in ethics. Kant determined to borrow no help from habit, and he would not for a moment make morality dependent on emotion. The will of man is autonomous, and on it the ethical life must be reared. "There is nothing that can be termed absolutely and altogether good except a good will." Over this will the moral law is dominant. That law is found not in the fields of experience. Pure reason commands it. *This bare idea of duty*, this grand moral law of itself, and without any aid from feelings, by its stern imperative, is sufficient to command men's reverence and obedience.

The Utilitarian School knows only one moral motive, that of *self-interest*. It gives to pleasure or self-love a foremost place. The higher a man advances in goodness the greater is his happiness. If, say the utilitarians, we include in pleasure those joys that spring from the mental and spiritual not less than the physical sides of our nature, we have an efficient mainspring of duty. But then, we reply, if

self-love be put forward as the propelling power in the moral life, it comes into conflict with the well-known paradox of pleasure, that the best way to get happiness is to forget it; and that if we think about the pleasure itself, we are certain in our quest to miss it. This paradox of Hedonism, that in order to gain pleasure we must seek some other end, contradicts the theory that pleasure can be the moral motive, and shows that it is only an accompaniment of moral conduct. When the impulse to pleasure is too dominant, it defeats its own aim.

If the motive adduced by Kant was too high and vague, if the naked idea of the moral law is too impalpable for the majority of mankind to feel its power, on the other hand, pleasure or expediency is too gross to be a sufficient power of the moral life. Mere feeling is a weak principle of unity. Pleasure does not provide for its own guidance, but needs a higher illumination. Therefore neither moral law alone nor pleasure alone can supply the motive power of which we are in quest.

Hence it is that men turn away in weariness from theories of virtue to the promise of religion.[1] They intensely feel that the needed moral leverage is not to be found within themselves. They take little

[1] Cf. Prof. Peabody, chap. vii., *The Ascent of Ethics.*

interest in theories of virtue or in discussions about moral ideals, knowing that these have frequently been fruitless logomachies, and that they possess no power to make us righteous. We can no more by our own internal resources lift ourselves up into a holy life, than a drowning man can lift himself up by the hair of his own head. That was the reason why the early Christians entirely abjured philosophical phrases and ethical maxims. "It was not the repetition of Stoic maxims that purified the human conscience," says the author of *Ecce Homo*. "It was the personality of Christ exciting a veneration and worship which effaced their hereditary worships. No theory will throw down ancestral traditions; but they can be overthrown by passionate personal devotion."[1] And as love provokes love, many have conceived for Christ an attachment the closeness of which no words can describe, a veneration so possessing and absorbing the man within them that they have said, "I live no more, but Christ lives in me."[2]

If we look in vain to Moral Philosophy for the power we are in search of, let us turn to the Christian Church and ask what her Scriptures say on this subject. She professes to foster every virtue and to possess a virtue-making power equal to all emergencies.

[1] *Ecce Homo*, 11th edition, p. 127.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 157.

The morality of Christianity is one that puts the moral motive in the very front.

Has the reader ever noticed the constant iteration in the New Testament of this word "power"? From His temptation in the wilderness "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit." After one of His miracles, "all were amazed at the mighty power of God." He announced that the kingdom of God "is come with power." His last words on Olivet were, "All power in heaven and earth is given unto Me."

The same word constantly occurs in the Pauline Epistles. To the Romans, who belonged to a race that exalted force, St. Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation." To the Greeks of Corinth, who were led away by a sophistical philosophy, he asserts, "Unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God." Indeed, it may be said that "power" is the key-word of the two Epistles to the Corinthians. A set of Sophists had been troubling the Church, men of mere words and endless logomachies, the Mr. Talkatives of the time; long-winded debaters, but powerless for good. To such captious critics the gospel seemed but foolishness, "But to us who are being saved," says St. Paul, "it is the power of God." He will go to Corinth again, and will discover "not

the word of them which are puffed up, but the power."

Thus in Scripture we constantly come into contact with the representation and embodiment of power. Christ's works were works of power. He had a power of healing, of cleansing, of judgment. His Incarnation was the embodiment both of the thought and power of God. His resurrection was the immediate cause of a new power by which we rise with Him to newness of life.

And He is not a power only of a past age. He is a power of to-day. His gospel is full of potential energy for this Twentieth Century. It is not in words but in power that its force is manifested. It does not stop at utterance; it does not cease to be potential when words concerning it are exhausted. It is not only an influence *moving towards us*; it is a power strong and effective *in us* who believe.

Yet in thus speaking we must be careful that we rightly understand the meaning of this word. And as everything is best known in its origin and development, so it is here. Whoever is acquainted with the history of Christianity, knows that it never has been, nor has pretended to be, a material or political force. In its early days it was totally destitute of secular influence. It was backed by no battalions; it wholly lacked the aid of Roman legionaries. The great

minds of Greece could not be appealed to in its favour. It did not speak in the language of the Academy; it made no attempt to use the logic of the Porch.

Yet in the young Church in Jerusalem were men who were endued with a power that soon made itself felt throughout the whole Roman Empire. A spiritual force was with them which reared a new creation out of the existing moral chaos. Here there was strength where all around there was but impotence; here the power of life, where all around was death.

We have only to glance at the men of the apostolic age for examples of this. The broadest feature in the lives and the works of St. Paul, of St. Peter, of St. John, was power. They were filled with it. They knew for themselves, and made men with whom they came in contact feel, that a great force from God, which could evoke life out of death, had descended upon them. Pentecost was to them the descent of a Spirit and an energy that was a power for the *needs of every day* as well as for the *loftier ranges* of spiritual experience. They were instinct with life, life fresh and glowing with the breath of heaven in it. So pervasive was it, so potential within them, that, like Spring-life in the trees, it burst forth from every pore. It spoke in their accent; it made

itself evident in their action; it carried conviction to many opponents' minds. We can easily perceive that it was the presence of this superabounding energy that led many of the early Christians into those excesses which Church History records. They were literally *overpowered* by it. They could set no bounds to their gratitude and gladness. Their property was handed over to the Church for its benefit. Their lives they counted not dear unto them. To propagate their faith they could endure the heats of Africa, the frosts of the Caucasus, the lions of the Colosseum, the Mamertine dungeon, and the martyr's death. They were so intoxicated (if one may use the word) with this new wine of the kingdom, that they disported themselves in the excesses of an intense asceticism.

Through all these extremes we can see the awakening of dormant energies, the exuberance of a life beating forth from living pulses. The Empire acknowledged it and submitted to it; and Paganism before it tottered to its fall.

Then, again, after a period of union with the State, in which the Church fell under the blighting influence of Papal dominion, this same spiritual power of the gospel burst forth in fresh life at the Reformation. Mediævalism died and Protestantism was born. But soon a reaction set in, and a period of weakness

and dormancy succeeded, to be itself followed by a fresh awakening of energy in England. What Montanism was to the religious life of the Church in the second, that was Methodism to the religious life of England in the eighteenth, century. It was a great revival movement, kindling into a glowing flame the smouldering emblems of the life which was now all that remained of the previous fires. And to-day we feel its influence.

Thus we see how the whole history of the Church has been moulded by the power of the gospel of Christ. It is the strongest force in the civilisation of the Twentieth Century. It is the *firm vertebral column* which prevents that civilisation from deteriorating into a molluscous and luxurious softness, flabby and helpless in its unbelief. It is to-day a well-known positive power in every Christian life, a power that we can prove both by observation and experiment, and to which thousands of changed lives bear ample testimony. It is strongest and most manifest in the hearts of those most marked by consecration and force of character. But it inspires every one in whom it dwells with a sense of victorious might that is equal to all the tasks and trials of life. It is to each of them "the power of God unto salvation," a salvation from sin's penalty and from sin's dominion. And so they can say, in the paradoxical language of

St. Paul, "I will therefore glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Where do we discover the springs of this dynamic of Christian character? What are the elements of it? And how is it to be received by us?

1. In one word, we may say that the power of the Christian life is *in Jesus Christ.* It is the living God-Man, the ascended and glorified Lord, who dwells and works in the hearts of His disciples. Our modern Christianity has all but lost the sense of the present Christ. We dwell upon His work in the first century. We travel back so often in thought to Nazareth and Calvary, that we are apt to neglect or to forget His present-day work, which will never be finished until the whole Church is perfected and the world is redeemed. In no unreal sense Christ dwells in every Christian man, and is the inspiration of his life. He is no transient visitor, but an abiding Guest, "dwelling in the heart by faith." "Lo! I am with you alway," is not to be diluted down into *a mere influence* separable from Himself. A Confucius, a Sakya Muni, or a Mahomet may exert such a moral influence among his followers. The noble dead who have gone before us still "rule our spirits from their urns."

> "By bed and table they lord it o'er us,
> With looks of beauty and words of good."

But the moral power of Christ *is more than a memory of One who has faded away from us into the unseen land.* It is a power of the present moment, effective at the centre of our moral and spiritual being. It is not enough to speak of it as an accomplished atonement wrought out on the Cross, or even as a work of intercession continually being carried on at God's right hand. Such a description does not exhaust what the Bible affirms. Christian experience teaches the present and immediate efficacy of Christ. He is not only pleading for us in heaven, but *He is with us and in us on earth.* "I carry God in me," said the Christian Father: and so they called him Theophoros. In the temple of the Christian heart Christ dwells. There He works at the core of our spiritual nature, crucifying our self-will, regenerating our being, purifying our affections, the secret of the Christian's gladness and holiness. It is when we have shifted the centre of our being from self to Christ that we discover the existence of a strange new power within our hearts. We can now even glory in infirmities: we can take pleasure in distresses, because the power of Christ rests on us. These occasions are but foils to give this strange new strength a finer setting, and prove the startling paradox of St. Paul, "When I am weak, then I am strong."

Men boast of their strength, and tell us that the

strong man channels his own path and is the architect of circumstance; and that "'Impossible' is a blockhead of a word," not to be found in a Napoleon's dictionary. But what is weaker than pride? What is more foolish than ambition? What is less strenuous than self-will? What is more belittling than vanity? We speak of our resolutions, and register our vows on the morning page of our diaries, believing that we shall not fail to carry them out. But, alas! ere sunset comes the vow has been forgotten, the clean page has been blurred; and the strong resolve of the opening day brings at the close only a stinging sense of failure. Those who have got beyond the hallucinations of fantasy and the visions of youthful imagination know from sad experience that this inability will abide with them unless some stronger power than self interpose for their help.

"Each day a page is of my being's book,
And what I do is what I write therein;
And often do I make great blots of sin;
And seldom proves the writing much akin
To what, before 'twas writ, I undertook.

I turn a fresh leaf daily, and renew
My hopes of '*now at last a nobler page*';
But presently in something I engage
That looks but poorly in a calm review,
And leaves my future a mean heritage."

These lines contain a deep truth of the heart:

every one of us can respond to their sad confession. To will is present with us; but *how to perform we do not find.* The sensory nerves in the body transmit a message of pain to the brain when injury of a limb takes place; and immediately the motor nerves carry over their wires an order of command to the muscular system to protect the injured part. But when paralysis takes place, the motor nerves lose their power of action. There remains the consciousness of injury, but no power is present to cope with it. How many of us suffer from *moral paralysis!* The conscience is sensitive to wrong done; but there is no power of transmitting its commands. Have we never felt that we ought to speak to some wayward sinning soul whom we often meet, some poor drifting prodigal whom a kind word might recover from his evil ways? And yet we feel the message petrified upon our lips. The call of duty came to us; yet the *motor nerve of the moral nature would not obey.* We need a higher power to work in us both to will and to do.

2. What are *the elements* of this spiritual power? It is clearly impossible to present any minute analysis of it. This would be to repeat the mistake of the psychologists who map out human nature into faculty-compartments, and imagine that they have grasped our internal life by victorious analysis. There is much

more in our mental and instinctive constitution than can be found in any analyst's crucible. In the analysis of every entity, the Ego, the I, is apt to escape. *Character is more than its whole contents.* For when we put the whole elements together again, then we find that something appears in the synthesis which had been lost in the analysis; and this something is just the individuality which characterises the man, and the power which through it he exercises on his fellows. It is not by psychological analysis we shall find it.

The power comes from another, an external, source. It is the power *of the risen Christ*, communicated *through the Spirit*, and making every Christian man an instrument of its manifestation. It is the power referred to by St. John, "The wind bloweth where it listeth . . . so is every one that is born of the Spirit." It was promised by Christ ere He left the world in the words, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you." Christ's personal presence was withdrawn at the Ascension that it might through the Pentecostal gift be no longer a localised but a universal presence.

The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of wisdom, of truth, of grace, and of power. It is through the instrumentality of truth that He operates upon the mind and conscience. By this means He convinces men of sin, of

righteousness, of judgment; kindles suggestions, bestows guidance, clarifies the mind, and empowers the will. Truth being the instrument of His operation, the truth must never be dissociated from the Spirit nor the Spirit from the truth. If the former takes place, men soon fall into mere Intellectualism. If the latter error be committed, we soon see the rise of Mysticism.

The *body of truth* through which the Spirit mainly works is composed of the facts of revelation. This revelation of God enters the sphere of human life at the creation of man. Given to one particular people and race, it advances to its completion in Christ. In the great facts of Christ's life and death, as well as by the Divine witness in His words, we have the Divine order of salvation, the fulness of God's mercy and redeeming grace. And now, by the sending forth of His Spirit to bring men into quickened relation to these truths, the power of God makes itself distinguishable from the natural self-revelation of the spirit of man. In each believing heart there is a special working of the Spirit which comes to our consciousness as an inward revelation. It is a power of enlightenment, showing us our great need in the presence of Almighty grace that is equal to all our necessities. It becomes to those who in faith enter into that revelation a living experience of deliverance from

besetting sins, such as they never knew before. Thus the whole energy of the Christian character is traced through the truth back to Him who was Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The motive power may be said to be *in* the doctrines and means of grace; but in reality it works through their instrumentality. Not in the sacramental elements, but in the Spiritual Presence in them; not in the *Doctrine*, but in the *Doctor*, is the real power immanent and inherent.

Has not the history of missions shown what a mighty moral force lies in this doctrine of free forgiveness through Jesus Christ? Read the story of the work of Carey, Moffat, H. Martyn, and of the missionaries in Uganda. Everywhere this gospel brought to the heathen a new horizon of hopes, opened up a new world of desire and aspiration, and lifted up the lives of millions to a new level of righteous conduct. The missionary told them how Christ gave Himself for them, because God loved them. There was no special theory of atonement preached; they only heard, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son" to save them. That was all they wanted to know. That was the cause; and we know the effect. And the nexus that joined the two together was this wonder-working truth of the Divine Word, transforming itself in these simple

hearts into all the enthusiasm and energy of a converted life. It is an enthusiasm strong enough to sweep down before it all selfish passions of the heart. Where prudential considerations have failed to give a man the mastery over his moral nature; where the love of infant and child and parent has proved ineffectual to extinguish the craving of the drunkard's thirst or curb the vicious impulses of the shameless prodigal—there, time after time, has the power of the simple gospel been manifested to change the life and regulate the heart. Newton the slaver becomes Newton the preacher. The self-willed young Augustine becomes first the earnest student and then the holy Bishop of Hippo. Colonel Gardiner opens the New Testament and reads John iii. 16, and the man's whole life is changed. The doctrines of the Bible are not received as the doctrines of Political Economy may be received. *They translate themselves into moral fibre*; they are digested and assimilated, and the result is Christian character and Christian life. All the theories of philosophers have never done what the teaching of Christ has done and is doing every day in multitudes of hearts.

As one who writes from no resort of literary leisure, but who is in daily contact with suffering and sinning men and women, I confess that if this Divine gospel of God's love and forgiveness were taken away, I

should not know where to go for truths that could supply *the motive power and renewing efficacy* that are needed. I know of no such leverage in the doctrines of political economy or of academic philosophy. Pure ethics cannot do it. The milk-and-water gospel of æsthetics cannot do it. Science and art have no fulcrum on which to rest any such lever. But the gospel of God's love, the doctrine of Christ's atoning sacrifice, the assurance of guilt cancelled and the heart cleansed by grace,—these doctrines of the Divine Word have once and again proved their efficacy to convert the sinner and bring him back from the swinish fare and the alien land. These are the healthy words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Their fruit is wholesome; for it is the fruit of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. In no philosophical or political creed can we find any such powerful motives to righteous conduct and holy living. Here only do we find a sufficient assurance for duty, a driving force strong enough to turn all the wheels of religious service.

3. What should be our aim here? Surely to see that these truths have their normal and legitimate effect in us. Let us adjust ourselves to the influences of the Holy Spirit, yield our will to His counsel and our heart to His occupancy. Let us seek to have the energy of the Holy Spirit, so to speak, *naturalised in us*, so that our character shall be the genuine product

of a Spirit-possessed soul. In a true believer wholly given up to Christ's will and service, these fruits of the Spirit do get naturalised. Meekness, long-suffering, gentleness are all germane to godliness, and are the normal condition of a Christian's nature. He naturally and normally "brings forth fruit unto holiness."

Every Christian man who is desirous of attaining a strong character will earnestly pray for this enduement of power, and will carefully study the conditions on which it is received. In the Epistles of St. Paul, Christians are exhorted to seek after this as a special gift. In one of his grand prayers (Eph. iii. 16) the apostle pleads that "He would grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit." And again he asks that these same members might know "what is the hope of their calling, and what the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead." It is thus by the prayer of faith and in constant waiting on God that the power of the Spirit is bestowed. If in faith and in a whole-hearted surrender we give ourselves to the Lord to be filled with His Spirit, He will honour us by making us the instruments of the exercise of this mighty power. "When the Church returns to Pen-

tecost, Pentecost will return to the Church." The Pentecostal spirit, however, cannot take possession of believers beyond their capacity of receiving it. Only they will be *filled* with the Spirit of power who, first of all, have been *emptied* of the spirit of pride. A cleansed heart is the secret of a strong life—

> "His strength was as the strength of ten,
> Because his heart was pure."

4. This wonderful "clothing with power from on high," this receiving the "power of the Holy Ghost," takes place in a manner which, as a rule, is contrary to the expectations of those who have known it. It astonished the Apostle of the Gentiles himself. He prayed that the cause of his weakness might be taken away, that he might be filled with a sense of power. He tells us how he got the astonishing answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee; My strength is made perfect in weakness." Mark how the sense of weakness was not removed, the power was not given as something which St. Paul might speak of as his own. It is not therefore an attribute of the Christian personality. We have the power only as we have the Spirit of the Lord abiding in us. It is in the foil of our weakness that that wondrous power has its fair setting.

Scripture paradoxically links power and weakness together. "When I am weak, then I am strong."

But every profound experience of the soul has to betake itself to paradox. Language is sublimely inadequate. The Christian man says, "I die, yet I live; I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; I am poor, yet make many rich; have nothing, yet possess all things. Therefore I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." The Divine Spirit hides Himself in the weak things of the world, that no flesh may glory in His presence.

5. I fear that many Christians at this point in their experience commit errors which are full of lamentable results. Many do not wait on God with patient faith for this motive power. Others wait in a wrong way, neglecting their post of duty until this spiritual force take possession of them. But he who is wise in the things of the kingdom will not neglect a single duty while he pleads for the power that shall fit him to perform it. If we combine ready obedience to every call of duty with sincere dependence upon Divine aid, the day of earnest effort will bring the proof that out of weakness we have been made strong.

It is a matter of constant complaint with Christian people, that *their influence is so weak*, and that they fall so far below their earlier expectations and hopes. They sigh at the base of cliffs which they cannot scale; they stand before enterprises which they seem

powerless to undertake; they initiate schemes, but as soon as they are put on paper or in print they begin to tremble at their own daring. Such people should remember the condition on which alone this Divine power works in and through them. In the spiritual realm power is never to be had but *in submission to the laws of its operation.* All around us in this world-home of ours, great forces are continually throbbing. They are prepared to carry our messages, to drive our cars, and weave our robes, if first we absolutely obey the methods of their working. Only give them obedience, and they will toil with Herculean might in our service. If, similarly, *we comply with the laws* of the Spirit of God, then we shall find that a new power will begin to throb through our being, and will equip us fully for every service to which we may be called. Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, we shall know the exceeding abundance of that spiritual force with which our ascended Lord promises to endow every one of His disciples.

Men long for power, and count no sacrifice too great to gain wide influence. It is even a Christian duty to covet this gift, and to adopt all means to procure it in order that our character may be strong and our influence weighty for good. It may be ours, gladly and joyfully ours, if we obey the condition on

which alone it can work through us. *The yielded life is a forceful life; it is not a will extinguished, but a will surrendered.* God does not demand that our human will should be withered up like the sinews of a Fakir's unused arm. He only asks that we shall comply with every one of His commands, and be as pliant to His will as the finely trained and spirited steed is to the touch of the rider. When we are plastic clay in the hands of the Potter, prepared to take any shape He chooses, to be a vessel unto honour or dishonour as it pleases Him, then we are meet for the Master's use, and we shall be used. Unconditional submission to the Spirit's guidance is the condition of being endued with spiritual power. We may rest assured that if we desire to get possession of that power and use it for Him, He no less desires that the power should get possession of us, and that we should be used in His service.

The soldier who has thoroughly learned to obey is the soldier who will soon be called to command. "I also am a man under authority, having under me soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth." He who is himself under the leading of a Higher Power will soon be of influence among his neighbours. To be over others we must be under the Spirit; to be influential with others we must be pliant to the Divine Will.

6. This is the greatest need of the Church. Not more money, but *more men of power*. Not more members so much as consecrated members. Not more political influence, but more spiritual force. When the power of the Highest comes upon the Church and overshadows meek and waiting souls, who shall estimate the rich results that shall accrue to Christian character? It will then be raised to its highest power. If her members will but watch and pray for it, seeking it as silver and searching for it as for hid treasures, apt to discern the slightest token of the Divine Will and prompt to obey it, they will "become strong and will do exploits." The world is waiting for such men.

The largest part of every Christian's influence is latent. Of all those saints and holy men who have moved the Church and raised her in their time to the high-water mark of spiritual influence, of her Origens, her Cyprians, her Ambroses, her Augustines, her Bedes, and Bernards, there has always been something finer and deeper in the men than anything that they have said. The inequality between their reputation and their recorded work cannot be accounted for on the principle that the echo is louder than the thunderclap, or that traditions gather round every great name. These men were filled with the Spirit of power; they were impelled by an invisible Force,

whose counsels they could not impart, but whose guidance and inspiration they could as little deny. The secret of their wonderful influence lay not so much in gifts of intellect as in their surrender "to the Spirit of power and might, the Spirit of wisdom, and of the fear of God."

Men say that these were spiritual giants, greatly gifted, and born with a religious genius which lent itself to spiritual influences. But, allowing for all that is magnetic in lofty minds, there remains a *residuum of influence* which cannot thus be accounted for. It is found in the fact that in all these lives there was a wonderful openness to Divine influences, a preparedness to act simply as the Lord's couriers, to say what He bade them say, and to lay claim to this covenanted portion of all believers. They believed in the marvellous possibilities of grace; they pleaded for the Pentecostal power; they gladly yielded their heart to the Spirit of fire which is a spirit of cleansing and consuming; they consented that He should increase and they should decrease. And so, having become fit instruments for His hand, they received the baptism of power. Like wrestling Jacob, they were created princes of God, and with men they prevailed.

There is far more in this doctrine of the Holy Spirit and in this fact of moral power *than the writer*

of these lines or any one individual may have ever experienced. The enduement of power promised to all who believe may be something beyond what any portion of the Church has yet received. But the gift of Pentecost, apart from its miraculous manifestations, was not only for one age but for all times. They who wait on God, coveting earnestly His best gifts, shall understand what Christ meant when He spoke of those "greater works" which should be done by those who should hereafter believe on His name. Here is the true moral motive power for Christian character; here is the dynamic for all Christian duty, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me."

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